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THE
Divine Authority
OF THE
OLD and NEW TESTAMENT
ASSERTED:

With a particular Vindication of the Characters of MOSES, and the PROPHETS, our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and his APOSTLES, against the unjust Aspersions and false Reasonings of a BOOK, Entitled,

The MORAL PHILOSOPHER.

By JOHN LELAND, M.A. K

Author of an ANSWER to a Book entitled,

Christianity as Old as the CREATION.

ELIHU in JOB XXXIII, 13, 14.

Why dost thou strive against God? For he giveth not Account of any of his Matters. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not.

L O N D O N:

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REFACE

A
and of a just Liberty of Thinking, this would
be the sincere Lovers and Friends of Truth,
Gentlemen were really what they pretend to
than their own confident Boastings. If these
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Man's self. But as no Man's Free-Thinker
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P R E F A C E.

A JUST Liberty of Thinking (which on the one Hand is not governed by old and popular *Prejudices*, nor on the other Hand led aside by the *Affectation* of Novelty, and a desire of Thinking out of the common Way,) which hath nothing but *Truth* in View, and the serving the Cause of real Goodness and Righteousness, is certainly one of the noblest Things in the World. To be a *Free-Thinker* in this, which is the most proper Sense of the Word, must be owned to be an honourable and amiable Character. This the Enemies of our Holy Religion are sensible of, and therefore they have done themselves the Honour to assume this Character as if it were their sole Privilege, and a Distinction that sets them above the rest of Mankind. But as no Man is a Free-Thinker, or a good Reasoner, merely for calling himself so, the Justness of their Pretensions to that Character must be examined by other Things than their own confident Boastings. If these Gentlemen were really what they pretend to be, the sincere Lovers and Friends of Truth, and of a just Liberty of Thinking, this would

appear by their fair and ingenuous Way of treating the Argument they have undertaken. We should be able to trace in their Conduct, and in their Writings, the fair and beautiful Lines of Candour and Sincerity, an impartial Love of Truth, and an Openness of Mind to Conviction and Evidence, a Modesty of Sentiment, and a calm and serious Temper of Mind becoming the Importance of the Enquiry. But I shall hardly be thought severe, if I say, that he that would look for any Thing of this Kind in the Writings of those that have lately appeared amongst us in the Cause of *Infidelity*, would find himself very much disappointed. Bold and confident Assertions he will every where meet with, many Things that discover high Conceit of their own Sagacity and Penetration, and a Contempt of others that do not think in their Way; a Willingness to use any Arts of Misrepresentation to serve their Cause; and a strong Desire to give an odious or a ludicrous Turn to every Thing where Revelation is concerned; and all covered over with a pretended Regard (tho' it must be owned the Disguise is generally very thin) for that Religion, they are using their repeated Endeavours to subvert and to destroy.

But amongst them all there is scarce any who hath rendered himself more remarkable this Way than one that hath lately appeared under the Character of the *Moral Philosopher*, tho', if there be any Morality in Writing, I never knew any that had a less just Pretension

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Pretension to this Character. I would be one of the last to charge any Man with a Want of Honesty and Sincerity: but there are many Things in his Book that look like a wilful Perversion and Misrepresentation of Facts, as well as Arguments; and sometimes so circumstanced, that it is scarce possible for the most extensive Charity to suppose that it was owing to mere Ignorance. Perhaps the Author himself would not be willing to accept of this Apology. I cannot help looking upon it as an Honour to Christianity, that its *Adversaries* find themselves obliged to take such Methods as these, in order to carry on their Designs against it. Does not this argue a secret Consciousness that they can never prevail by a *fair Attack* upon the Scriptures? For surely he must be either very wicked or very foolish, that would have recourse to such base Arts as these to serve his Cause, if he thought his End could be answered without it, and that fair and just Reasoning, and an equal candid Management would do as well.

This Author pretends to go farther in his Concessions, than some of his Brethren and Fellow-Labourers in the same Cause. He acknowledgeth the great Usefulness of *Revelation*, in Aid of human Reason in the present corrupt State of Mankind; and seems to find Fault with those who maintain, That *under the present Pravity and Corruption of Mankind, the Religion of Nature is written with sufficient Strength and Clearness upon every Man's Heart*; and who therefore are not so *thankful* as they

ought to be *for the Light of the Gospel*, p. 145. And tho' he openly and avowedly rejects the *Old Testament*, and plainly declares that he will have *nothing to do with it in Religion*; yet if we were to judge of his Sentiments by several Passages in his Book separately considered, one would be apt to think that he entertained very favourable Thoughts of Christianity. It were easy to fill several Pages with direct and formal Passages, where he speaks honourably of *Jesus Christ*, and the *Religion* he hath introduced; as having brought clearer Discoveries of our Duty, and enforced it by stronger Motives, and provided more effectual Aids, than ever was done before. And he expressly declares himself to be a *Christian upon the Foot of the New Testament*, p. 359. But if we compare these with other Passages in his Book, we shall find Reason to think that all his pretended Regard for Christianity, and the Religion of *Jesus* is only the better to carry on his Design of subverting it. At the same time that he affects to speak with great Respect of *Jesus Christ* he insinuates several base Reflections upon his Conduct and Character; and justifies those that put him to Death as acting like good Patriots, who were under a Necessity of doing what they did out of a regard to the Welfare and Safety of their Country. Tho' he pretends to acknowledge the Usefulness of divine Revelation, and particularly of the Revelation brought by *Jesus Christ* in the present corrupt State of Mankind, he leaves us no way of knowing when a divine Revelation

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lation is really given; and particularly endeavours to destroy the Proof on which the Authority of *Christ's* divine Mission, and of the Christian Revelation is established, drawn from Miracles, Prophecy, and the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost: yea, he absolutely denies them to be any Proofs at all. Tho' he sometimes talks of the great Benefit of the Light of the *Gospel*, yet he will not allow that any one Thing was discovered by that Revelation but what was known as well before, except *Salvation by Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah*, that is, as he explains it, the national Deliverer of the *Jews*, and the Restorer of the Kingdom to *Israel* in a temporal political Sense. This very Thing which he all along explodes as false and absurd, he represents as the only proper Article of the *Christian Faith* *, and as the whole of that Gospel which was preached by all the Apostles, except *St. Paul*, who he pretends preached a different Gospel from the Rest. He professeth to be a *Christian on the Foot of the New Testament*, and yet he represents it as *leaning strongly towards Judaism*, and as a Jumble of *inconsistent Religions*, and not at all to be depended on for a just Account either of Doctrines or Facts. And what plainly discovereth his determined Malice against the New Testament, is, that he pretends the *Canon*, as we now have it, was *corrected, revised, and published by the Jews*, who altered it according to their own Prejudices and false

* See p. 349.

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Opinions; even by those very *Jews* who soon after upon being disappointed in *Jesus* set up *Barchochab* for their Messiah, p. 440, 441. Finally after all the Compliments he pays to Revelation in general, and to the Christian Revelation in particular, as of great Use in the present corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind, and notwithstanding his Acknowledgment that the Religion of Nature is not written with sufficient Strength and Clearness upon every Man's Heart, yet when he comes to describe the true Religion, or moral Philosophy, as he calls it in the latter End of his Book, and the Means by which it is to be obtained, he doth not send Men to the Gospel for Instruction, but sends every Man to the Light of Nature in his own Breast, to *the Heaven*, to *the Earth*, and especially to *the brute Creatures*, to learn *Reason*, *Virtue*, and *Religion*. Where he seems to put a special Note upon the *brute Creatures* as much properer Instructors than Books of *historical Religion*, which is the Title he usually thinks fit to bestow upon the Holy Scriptures. See p. 418—430.

This may give the Reader some Notion of this Writer's Candour and Sincerity, and what we are to think of his pretended Regard for Christianity, which in Effect amounts to this: That the Christianity revealed in the Writings of the New Testament is *Jewish Christianity*, that is, Christianity corrupted and adulterated with *Judaism*, which according to him is the worst Religion in the World. But the true and genuine Christianity is *Christian Deism*, to be

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be learned not from the Writings of the New Testament, but from the Volume of Nature, from every Man's own Breast, from the Heavens, the Earth, and *especially the Brute Creatures*, the genuine uncorrupted Instructors in our Author's Christianity. So that the Gentlemen that assume to themselves the Title of *Deists*, seem resolved that for the future they only shall be called the *true Christians* too. Those that look upon the *New Testament* to be divinely inspired, and receive it as the Rule of their Faith, and take their Religion from thence, must be called *Christian Jews*, who only put a strange Mixture of inconsistent Religions upon the World for Christianity: whereas these *Christian Deists* teach it in its Purity, and in order to propagate pure uncorrupted Christianity they do their utmost to discard the Writings of the New Testament, that is, the Writings that give us an Account of the Doctrines taught by Christ and his Apostles. But since these Gentlemen will not allow us the honourable Title of *Christians*, it is but fair that they should leave us that of *Free-Thinkers*, to which I really think the Advocates for the Gospel Revelation have a much juster Pretension than they. But they seem to be too fond of this Title to part with it. All the Religion this Writer seems willing to allow us is only an *Historical, Political, Clerical, Mechanical Faith and Religion*, which are Terms of Art he often makes Use of to describe Revealed Religion; whilst he appropriates *Real Religion*, and *moral Truth and Righteousness*

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teousness to himself, and those of his own Faction.

Thus whatever the rest of the World think of these Gentlemen, they are resolved to think very well of themselves. If others will but take their Words for it, they must pass for the only *Free-Thinkers*, the only *Moral Philosophers*, and the only *Men of Sense*: For he lets us know, that there is not a *Man of Sense in England* that goes to Church for any other Reason, but for Fear of the Imputation of *Atheism*, that the Clergy would otherwise lay upon him, p. 115. They are the Men, and Wisdom must die with them; the only Men of *Real Religion*, and Friends of *Moral Truth* and *Righteousness*, and finally in their own Opinion the only true *Christians*. It will be easily allowed, that their Pretensions to all these Characters are alike just, and well-founded.

But besides all this, they seem to set up for a Kind of *Infallibility* too. This Writer talks of his Moral Philosopher's having his *Understanding irradiated with the Beams of immutable eternal Reason*, which he calls an *infallible Light from Heaven* to teach and inform us how to act. He represents him as receiving *Intelligence and Information from eternal Wisdom*, and bearing the clear intelligible *Voice of his Maker and Former*, speaking to his silent *undisturbed attentive Reason*: whereas others that seek for Information in Religion from Books meet with nothing but *Confusion and Distraction, a Babel of Faith and Religion*. He often talks as if he and those of his Way, who pretend

pretend wholly to govern themselves by the Principles of *moral Truth and Righteousness*, had an *infallible Criterion of divine Truth*, by which they were secured from Error, and in which Men *cannot be mistaken*. He represents the Principles of the *Religion of Nature* as what all Men *must agree in*, whereas they are for ever divided in Points of mere Revelation, p. 94. But how comes it then that this Writer, in this very Book, thinks himself obliged to argue against some of his Brethren, who he tells us would be thought to be *great Philosophers and very wise Men*, who yet deny Man's *Free-agency*, the Obligations of the Duty of *Prayer*, and God's continual and immediate *Agency and Influence* in the Government of the World? I suppose he will hardly pretend that these are uncertain, and of no Importance, because Men, and those too that profess to be impartial Inquirers, are divided about them. For he tells us, that these Things are of *infinite Consequence to Mankind*. And yet in several Parts of his Book he raiseth a mighty Stir about the Differences among *Christians*, with relation to the Articles of their Faith, as if this were a Demonstration that these Doctrines are uncertain and obscure, and of no use to Mankind. An Argument that may be turned with equal Force against natural Religion, and against the common Principles of Sense and Reason.

He expresseth his Apprehension, that this Performance of his would raise up all the Clergy of the Nation: that *the Silver-Smiths*
would

would be all in an Uproar: the Judaizing Clergy would be in Arms: and many large elaborate Volumes would be written, and a thousand Sermons preached against his Book. He also foretels, that they would clearly and triumphantly confute all that he had said without so much as answering any one Objection. See p. 11, 357, 358. All that can be concluded from this is, that he looks upon himself to be a Writer of very great Importance. But I do not find there hath been so general an Alarm, or that his Attack against revealed Religion hath been judged so very formidable as he seemeth to apprehend. Perhaps to have taken no Notice of him at all would have been a greater Mortification to this Writer than the best Answer that could be published against him. And yet on the other Hand it is not unlikely that in the Opinion he seems to have of his own Sufficiency, he might be ready to flatter himself, that if the Friends of Revelation did not answer him, it was because they could not do it. Indeed I should think it of very little Consequence to the World what he thought of this Matter! but possibly the suffering such an insolent Attack upon revealed Religion to pass unregarded might be of Disadvantage in an Age already too much inclined to Infidelity. This Writer's smart and confident Way of saying Things, and the high Pretences he every where makes to Reason and Demonstration, may be apt to impose upon some that will not give themselves the Trouble of a very close Examination. And the

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the Objections he hath raised give Occasion to the clearing some Difficulties, and to the setting some Things in a proper Light, that may be of Service to those, who, tho' they are not without their Doubts, are willing to be informed. I thought therefore it might be of Use to enter upon a distinct Examination of this Philosopher: In which, I have not willingly concealed the Strength of any Objection he hath advanced, and perhaps have considered several Things he offers more fully and particularly than some will judge needful.

This Work is entirely confined to the Objections he urgeth against the Old and New Testament, and therefore no Notice is taken of the Account he pretends to give of the Sentiments and Practice of the primitive Christians, tho' this might furnish us with farther Proofs of the Injustice and Disingenuity of this Writer. Nor have I meddled with his Invectives against the *Clergy*, the *Priests*, the *Theologasters*, the *System-mongers*, the *Faith-mongers*, &c. These are Things so much to be expected from Writers of this Kind, that they only pass for Words of Course. He acknowledgeth indeed that many *Ecclesiasticks of the several Denominations are wise and reasonable Men*: but I believe they will scarce think themselves obliged to him for his Compliment, since he insinuates at the same Time that they are in his own Way of thinking. But as for those that stand up for *positive, instituted, revealed and political Religion*, or the *Religion of the Hierarchy*, for all these are in his Language

guage the same Thing, he plainly lets us know that it is *not* his Design to distinguish between one Sort of Clergy and another, because in this Case they are scarce distinguishable, p. 94.

I have endeavoured in the following Answer to dispose his Objections into some Order, than which nothing can be more confused and irregular as they lye in his Book. I first consider what he offereth concerning the Proofs of divine Revelation in general; and then proceed to examine the Objections he hath advanced against the *Old Testament*, or the Law of *Moses* and the Prophets, with regard to which he acteth an open undisguised Part, and no where concealeth his Malice. In the last Place the Authority of the *New Testament*, and the Doctrine and Character of our Saviour *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles is asserted and vindicated, and his pretended Account of the *Jewish Christianity* detected. The Summary of the several Chapters which followeth this Preface will give the Reader a fuller View of the Design and Method of this Work: in which several Things are considered more fully than would have been necessary, if I had nothing in view but precisely to answer the Book before me. As I have once before engaged in a Work of this Nature, I sometimes beg leave to refer to it that I may not be guilty of needless Repetitions.

Our Author declares in his Preface that he had no other Design in view than to serve the Cause of Virtue and true Religion. How

far the Methods he makes use of are consistent with such a Design the impartial Reader will determine. I can sincerely profess that the Reason of my Undertaking this Work is because I am firmly persuaded that the Cause of Christianity is the Cause of God, of religious Truth and Virtue: That to assert the Authority of the Scriptures is one of the best Services that can be done to Mankind, and even to the Interests of natural Religion, the main Principles of which are there most clearly explained, most strongly established, and most powerfully enforced: That if the Christian Revelation were once discarded, the strongest Restraints to Vice and Wickedness would be removed, and the most effectual Motives to the Practice of Virtue and the purest Morals, together with those glorious and divine Hopes which are the chief Support and Joy of a good Man's Life, would be subverted, or in a great Degree weakened: That to take the Scriptures out of the Hands of the People would be to give them up to all Manner of Wickedness, Ignorance, Superstition, and false Worship, and to leave them exposed to be practised upon by artful and designing Men, against all which a thorough Acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and a firm Adherence to them as the great Rule of Faith and Practice is the most effectual Preservative.

I can scarce form to my self an Idea of a Revelation whose Doctrines and Precepts have a more manifest Tendency to promote the Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind,

or

or that is more remote from the Views of worldly Ambition, Avarice, and Sensuality; in a Word, that carries in it greater internal Characters of Goodness and Purity, or is attended with more illustrious external Attestations of a divine Original. Nor are the Difficulties that attend it greater than may well be expected, supposing a Revelation really given to Mankind. Several of these Difficulties are obviated in the following Book, and if what is here offered may be of Service to the Interests of real Religion and important Truth, I shall not repent the Pains I have been at under much bodily Weakness to serve so glorious a Cause.

Errors occasion'd by the Author's distance from the Press.

PAGE 27. line 6. for *affect* read *effect*. p. 45. l. 38. for *Property* r. *Propriety*. p. 57. l. 18. for *respected* r. *respective*. p. 69. l. 23. for *Types* r. *true*. p. 89. l. 22. for *Disjunctions* r. *Injunctions*. p. 122. l. 37. dele *and*. p. 133. l. 30. for *Dispensations* r. *Dispersions*. p. 134. l. 26. after *if* r. *not*. p. 135. l. 37. for *Cruelty* r. *Cavalry*. p. 142. l. 14. for *truly* r. *very*. p. 144. l. 2. for *relating* r. *related*. p. 17. l. 8. for *Riches* and *Donations* r. *the richest Donations*. p. 159. l. 11. for *unalterable* r. *unutterable*. p. 169. l. 9. for *Contrasts* r. *Counter-act*. p. 335. l. 26. for *ought* r. *might*. p. 344. l. 33. for *separated* r. *departed*. p. 347. l. 14. for *bare* r. *base*. p. 394. l. 22. for *them* r. *him*. l. 37. for *that was* r. *that he was*. p. 407. l. 9, 10. r. *is it likely*. p. 437. l. 28. r. *cruelty to good Men*. p. 473. l. 11. after *Sin* dele *not*. p. 476. l. 31. after *of* r. *the Sins that are repented of, how can it procure the pardon of*.

T H E C O N T E N T S.

C H A P. I.

THE Moral Philosopher's Concessions concerning the Usefulness of divine Revelation, in the present corrupt State of Mankind. He leaves no Way of knowing when such a Revelation is really given. His Pretence that moral Truth and Fitness as appearing to our Understandings, is the only Proof or Evidence of divine Truth, or of any Doctrine as coming from God, examined. That not only the Persons to whom the Revelation is originally and immediately made, but others also may have a sufficient Assurance of its being a Revelation from God, so as to make it reasonable for them to receive it as of divine Authority. And particularly that Miracles may be so circumstanced as to furnish a sufficient Proof of a Person's divine Mission, and of the divine Original and Authority of Doctrines and Laws attested, and confirmed by those Miracles. The Author's Exceptions against this considered. And what he offers to shew that a divine Revelation cannot be conveyed to us by human Testimony, so as to be a Matter of divine Faith, examined.

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THE

Divine Authority

OF THE

OLD *and* NEW TESTAMENT

ASSERTED, &c.

CHAP. I.

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dered. And what he offers to shew that a divine Revelation cannot be conveyed to us by human Testimony, so as to be a Matter of divine Faith, examined.

THE moral Philosopher, in several Parts of his Book, speaks of Revelation with Respect. He no where expressly denies either the Possibility or Usefulness of divine Revelation in general. On the contrary he seems plainly to assert that it may be of great Use, in aid of human Reason, in the present corrupt State of Mankind. What he offereth to this Purpose, Page 143, 144, 145 is very strong and express. He there acknowledgeth that at the time of Christ's coming into the World, Mankind in general were in a State of gross Ignorance and Darkness, with respect to the true Knowledge of God and of themselves, and of all those moral Relations and Obligations we stand in to the supreme Being, and to one another. That they were under great Uncertainty concerning a Future State, and the Concern of divine Providence in the Government of the World, and at the same time were filled with a proud and vain Conceit of their own natural Abilities and Self-sufficiency. That our Saviour's Doctrines on these Heads, tho' they appeared to be the true and genuine Principles of Nature and Reason, when he had set them in a proper Light, yet were such as the People had never heard or thought of before, and never would have known without such an Instructor, and such Means and Opportunities of Knowledge: and that it doth not follow, that because these are natural Truths and moral Obligations, that therefore there could be no need of Revelation to discover them: as the Books of Euclid and Newton's Principia contain natural Truths, and such as are necessarily founded in the Reason of Things, and yet none but a Fool or a Madman would say that he could have informed him-
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self in these Matters as well without them. He speaks of our natural Weakness and Inability; and represents those as conceited of themselves, who talk of the Strength of human Reason in Matters of Religion in the present State of Mankind. He saith, that they who would judge uprightly of the Strength of human Reason in Matters of Morality and Religion, under the present corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind, ought to take their Estimate from those Parts of the World which never had the Benefit of Revelation; and this, perhaps, might make them less conceited of themselves, and more thankful to God for the Light of the Gospel. He asks, if the Religion of Nature, under the present Pravity and Corruption of Mankind, was written with sufficient Strength and Clearness upon every Man's Heart, why might not a Chinese or an Indian draw up as good a System of natural Religion as a Christian, and why have we never met with any such? and he adds, that let us take Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, Socrates, or the greatest Moralist that ever lived without the Light of Revelation, and it will appear that their best Systems of Morality were intermixed and blended with much Superstition, and so many gross Absurdities as quite eluded and defeated the main Design of them.

All this seems fairly to grant the need there is of a divine Revelation, and its great Usefulness and Expediency, in the present corrupt State of Mankind, to instruct them in Things of considerable Importance, and to give them more clear and certain Knowledge in Matters of Religion and Morality, than they could have by the meer Strength of their own Reason without it. One would be apt to think that such an Acknowledgment could only be made with a friendly Design to establish the Authority of divine Revelation, and to prepare Mens Minds for a more favourable Reception of it. But this does not appear to be the Author's real and prevailing Intention. Whilst he seems to make

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such fair Concessions, he finds another way to make that Revelation, the Usefulness of which he would be thought to acknowledge, to be really of little or no use or Authority at all. For he in Effect leaves us no way of knowing or being assured when such a Revelation is really given. And it is the same thing with respect to the Use it may be of to Mankind to say—that no Revelation was ever given, or that it is entirely needless, and to say—that if it be given, we can have no way of knowing with sufficient Certainty that it is given, so as to make it reasonable for us to depend upon its Authority.

He maintains, That “ whatever Certainty God
“ may convey to a Man’s Mind by Inspiration or
“ immediate Revelation, the Knowledge of such
“ Truth can go no farther upon divine Authority,
“ or as a Matter of divine Faith, than to the Per-
“ son or Persons thus inspired, or to whom the
“ original Revelation is made ; and whoever after-
“ wards receives it from them must take it upon
“ their sole Credit and Authority, and not upon a
“ divine Testimony, or the Authority of God : In
“ which Case he believes in them, and not in God,
“ unless God should in like manner reveal to him
“ that he had made such a prior Revelation to them,
“ and then the Proof of their Revelation would be
“ needless to him, *p. 82.*” He expressly asserts,
that “ the Certainty any Man may have concern-
“ ing any Truth by immediate Revelation from
“ God is not naturally communicable. For he
“ could not convince any other Man not thus in-
“ spired, that he had any such Revelation from
“ God. If God speaks to me immediately and di-
“ rectly, I believe him upon his own Authority
“ without any human Interposition ; but if a Man
“ speaks to me as from God, I must take his own
“ Word for it, unless he could prove to me the
“ natural Reasonableness or Fitness of the thing : and
“ then

“ then I should take it indeed as coming from
“ God, but not upon any human Authority at all.
“ In a word, there can be no such thing as divine
“ Faith upon human Testimony ; and this absurd
“ Supposition has been the Ground of all the Su-
“ perstition and false Religion in the World,” *page*
83, 84. And the whole *Truth of the Matter* he
thinks *in short* is this, “ There is one, and but one
“ certain and infallible Mark or Criterion of divine
“ Truth, or of any Doctrine as coming from God,
“ which we are oblig’d to comply with as a Mat-
“ ter of Religion and Conscience: and that is the
“ moral Truth, Reason or Fitness of the thing it-
“ self, whenever it comes to be fairly proposed to
“ and considered by the Mind or Understanding.
“ The ways of conveying the Doctrines of Reli-
“ gion to the Mind of Man, and of proposing
“ them to a fair and equitable Consideration may
“ be various and different. They may be proposed
“ and conveyed to the Mind by Inspiration or im-
“ mediate Revelation from God, by historical tra-
“ ditional Evidence, or by the Exercise of Men’s
“ natural Faculties, by which those Truths occur-
“ red to the Mind under the Evidence of their
“ moral Reason or Fitness: But in which soever of
“ these ways the Doctrines and Truths of Religion
“ are conveyed and proposed to the Mind, the
“ Ground and Reason of their Reception and Be-
“ lief, and their Evidence and Proof as coming
“ from God is still the same, *i. e.* the moral eter-
“ nal Reason and Fitness of the things themselves,
“ as appearing to the Understanding upon a fair
“ impartial Consideration and Judgment of Rea-
“ son,” see *p.* 85, 86 compared with *p.* 10.
Here we may observe, that he plainly puts human
Testimony or Tradition, and Inspiration or imme-
diate Revelation from God, intirely on the same
foot in point of Authority: That the one no more
than the other is in itself a reason for my believing

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any thing that cometh to me from another Person in either of these ways. But I believe it both in the one case, and the other, meerly, because upon an impartial Consideration, it appeareth to my own Reason to be true in itself, abstracting intirely from the Authority of him from whom I had it whether God or Man.

By this the Reader may be enabled to judge of the Author's pretended regard for Revelation. For the account he gives of it comes plainly to this: That we must not believe any Doctrines to be true, because they are revealed from God to any other sent to ourselves, but we must believe them to be revealed from God, because we know them by our own Reason to be true, by Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing independent of the Authority of Revelation. And if we thus know them by our own Reason to be true, we shall believe them whether they be supposed to have been immediately revealed by God or not. Which is in effect to say, that we are to receive nothing upon the Credit of divine Revelation at all, unless the Revelation be immediately to ourselves; and that the Doctrines and Laws delivered as by Revelation from God, are entirely on the same foot of Authority and Evidence with those taught by the Philosophers, and others, who do not pretend to any immediate Revelation. If those things were uncertain to our Reason before the Revelation was published, they are so still, nor can the Testimony or Authority of that Revelation give us any additional Assurance concerning them. One while he supposes, that in the present State of Mankind, they need a Revelation from God to ascertain them of several Things of considerable Use and Importance; and another while, such a Revelation cannot ascertain them of those things at all: Because, in judging of those things brought by Revelation, they are to have no regard to the Authority of that Revelation.

lation as a Reason for believing them ; but just to consider them as they lie before their own Reason, and if they cannot prove them to be true from the Reason and Nature of the thing, independently of that Revelation, they are not to believe them to be revealed at all.

The Foundation of all this depends upon this Principle, which he frequently repeats in several Parts of his Book,—that *moral Truth or Righteousness and Fitness is the only infallible Mark or Criterion of divine Truth*, or of any Doctrine as coming from God. He reduces all the Proofs and Evidences of Religion to this alone, and represents it as a thing in which Men *cannot be mistaken*, p. 92. This is the Design of the second and fifth of those Principles which he tells us were agreed upon among the Gentlemen of their Club as true and defensible against all the Objections that could be urged against them, *see p. 8, 10.*

It is not easy to form a distinct idea of what this Writer means by *moral Truth and Righteousness*, or by a thing's appearing to the Understanding to be morally true ; which he declares to be the only sure Evidence and infallible Criterion of divine Truth, or of any Doctrine as coming from God. The most natural Meaning of this Expression, *moral Truth*, seems to be this, that a moral Truth is a Truth relating to Morality, or a Proposition which truly affirms something concerning some moral *Obligation*. So he seems to understand it, when he talks so often of the *Doctrines and Obligations of moral Truth and Righteousness*. But will he not allow any Doctrine to belong to Religion that is not in this Sense morally true ? This would discard several important Principles even in natural Religion. For it is evident there are Principles in Religion of great Consequence, distinct from the Propositions immediately relating to the Duties or Precepts of it. The Propositions and Principles relating to the Be-

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ing, the Attributes, and the Providence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, are not in this sense moral Truths, that is they do not directly and immediately affirm any moral Duty or Obligation, and yet I believe he will scarce deny that these things are of considerable Importance in Religion, and that we may have sufficient Evidence of their being true.

Or does he mean by the moral Truth and Righteousness of Doctrines that they have a good moral *Tendency*; a Tendency to promote the Practice of Morality and Righteousness, and that this Tendency is the only Evidence of their Truth? But neither can this be maintained. For tho' no Doctrine is to be admitted into Religion that is manifestly subversive of Morality and Righteousness, yet the good Tendency of a Principle or Doctrine is not of itself alone a sufficient Proof or Evidence of the Truth of that Principle or Doctrine. For many things might be mentioned which would have a good Tendency supposing them to be true, but this alone would not prove them true. And the Man would be ridiculous, that when required to prove or demonstrate the Truth of them, would only attempt to shew that if they were true they would tend to promote the Practice of moral Goodness, and that therefore this is a full Proof and Evidence that they are *actually* true. He would not be thought a very proper Advocate for the Existence of a God and a Providence, that should produce no other Argument to prove them than that they are of a good moral Tendency. The Truth of these Principles must be proved from other Topicks, and by other Arguments, and then it will be a farther Recommendation of them, and a great Advantage to shew the good Influence these Principles must have upon Mankind, and the Practice of Righteousness and Virtue. All the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, where they are sincerely received and
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entertained, have a good Effect on Morality, and the Practice of real Holiness, and tend to strengthen and improve good Affections and Dispositions in the Mind; and many good Men have found it to be so in their own Experience; but this alone is not the proper Evidence of their Truth. This must be proved by other Arguments, and then their good Tendency will be proper to shew their Usefulness and Importance.

But after all he sometimes talks as if by the *moral Truth* of Doctrines and Principles, he meant no more than the Reasonableness of those Doctrines, or the Evidence of the Doctrines arising from the reason of the Thing. *The moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things*, and the *moral Truth, Reasonableness, and Fitness of the Doctrines themselves*, are used by him as Terms of the same Signification, see p. 10, 86, 94. Where by *moral Truth* he seems to mean that which he calls the *natural Reasonableness and Fitness of the Thing*, and which he represents as a sufficient Proof of its coming from God, p. 84. And yet he there also distinguisheth between the *natural Reasons* and *moral Finesses of Things*, and allows each of these, *i. e.* the natural Reasonableness and Fitness of the Thing, and its being morally true and fit, to be a proper sufficient Evidence of its coming from God. Where he plainly sets up two Criteria of divine Truth, the *natural* and *moral Truth* and Fitness of the Thing itself; and how this is consistent with what he so often affirms, that *moral Truth* and Fitness is the *only* Evidence and Criterion of *divine Truth*, he would do well to explain. Indeed it is hard to fix the Idea of the word *moral* as used by this Author, and applied to Truth. It seems only to be put in because it is a word of a good Sound, and to make an Appearance of saying something, whilst in reality as he useth it, it serves only to perplex and confound the Question concerning

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cerning the proper Evidence or Proof of Doctrines and Principles. But that we may get out of this Confusion, I shall take it as if he had said; that the Reasonableness of the Doctrine itself appearing to the Understanding, is the only Evidence of its being a *divine Truth*, or of its *coming from God*. And here again it may be asked, what he means by a *divine Truth*, or a Truth as *coming from God*? does he mean a Truth that came by immediate Revelation from God? so he ought to understand it if he would speak to the Purpose; since the Question, as he himself seems to put it, is concerning the proper Proofs and Evidences of a divine Revelation, or how we may know that a Doctrine is revealed from God. And according to this State of the Case, the Principle advanced by our Author is to be understood thus, that a Doctrine's being reasonable in itself, and appearing to our Understanding to be true by Arguments drawn from the Nature and Reason of the Thing, is the only Proof of its coming by immediate Revelation from God. Whereas in reality this is no Proof of its being thus revealed at all. For a thing may be very true and very reasonable in itself, and yet not have come by immediate Revelation from God. So that to say, that this is the only Proof or Evidence of divine Revelation, is to say, that there can be no Proof of any Doctrine as coming by immediate Revelation from God at all. And this seems to be the Author's Intention. But is it not very odd to see him assume this all along without proving it, and argue from it as a Principle that cannot be contested, when it is the very Point in question?

Having thus endeavoured to detect the Confusion and Obscurity this Writer attempts to throw upon the Question relating to the Way by which we may come to know that any thing is revealed by God, I shall now proceed to treat this Matter more distinctly.

It is a Principle here supposed (and which the Author pretendeth not to contest) that a Revelation from God may be of great Use in the present corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind, to direct Men in true Religion, and instruct them in Things which it is of considerable Importance for them to know. And this is what I have proved at large elsewhere*. Now supposing that God should in his great Goodness see fit to give an extraordinary Revelation for the Use of Mankind, the most likely way of publishing that Revelation for general use seems to be this: That God should first communicate the Knowledge of his Will by immediate Inspiration to some Person or Persons, and then appoint or commission them to instruct Mankind, and to communicate to others what they themselves received. At the same time, furnishing them with sufficient Proofs, or Credentials, to convince others that they were indeed sent of God, and that what they thus deliver to the World in his Name, is not their own Invention, but that which they received by immediate Revelation from God himself. It was in this Method that the Christian Revelation was published to the World, the Usefulness of which, this Writer would be thought to acknowledge.

There are two Questions therefore to be distinctly considered. The one is, whether those to whom the original Revelation is immediately made, may have a sufficient Certainty that what they receive by immediate Inspiration, is indeed a Revelation from God: The other is, whether other Persons besides those to whom the original Revelation was made, may have a sufficient ground of reasonable Assurance, that what those Persons published to the World as by Revelation from God, is indeed a

* See Answer to *Christianity as old as the Creation*, Vol. I. Chap. V, VI.

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Revelation from God, and is therefore to be received and submitted to as such.

As to the first Question; That God *can* communicate the Knowledge of things by immediate Revelation or Inspiration in such a manner that the Person or Persons to whom such a Revelation is immediately made, may be certain that it is indeed a Revelation from God, cannot reasonably be denied. For it would be the most unreasonable and the most presumptuous Thing in the World to say, That when one Man hath a Power of conveying his Thoughts to another, so as to make him sensible that it is he and no other Person that speaks to him, God himself the Author of our Natures should have no way of communicating his Will to his own Creatures, so as to make them know that it is he that revealeth himself to them. Nor is it any Objection against this, that we cannot distinctly explain or account for the way in which he doth it. We have little notion of the way in which Spirits communicate their Thoughts to one another, but must we therefore conclude that they have no way at all of doing it, because we cannot now comprehend or explain the manner of it, and because they have not the Organs of bodily Speech as we have? No doubt they have far nobler and more perfect ways of communicating their Ideas to one another, than one Man hath of conveying his Thoughts to another here on Earth. And we may be sure that God hath a far nearer access to the human Mind, and a far more intimate and effectual way of operating upon it, or exciting and impressing Ideas there, than any created Spirit can have; or than one Man can have of communicating his Sentiments to another. Therefore, if it pleaseth him to communicate Doctrines or Laws to any Person by immediate Revelation, he can do it in such a manner, and with such an overpowering Light and Evidence, as to produce an absolute Certainty in the

Mind of that Person, that those Doctrines and Laws are by Revelation from him. Accordingly, this Writer himself seems to acknowledge Inspiration thus far, tho' it cannot well be reconciled to other Passages in his Book. As he makes *immediate Inspiration or Revelation from God*, to be one way of communicating the Knowledge of the Doctrines and Truths of Religion to the Mind, distinct from *Tradition* and *human Testimony*, and from the common Light of Reason in the *natural ordinary use of Men's own Faculties*, so he sometimes seems plainly to grant, that this may convey a Certainty to the Man himself that is thus immediately inspired, tho' he will not allow that the Knowledge of such Truth can go any farther upon divine Authority, or as a matter of divine Faith, than to the Person or Persons thus inspired, or to whom the original Revelation is made, *pag.* 82. And when he undertakes to state the Question concerning the way in which we may know whether any Law comes from God; he supposes that there are two ways in which there may be a *rational Proof given of a Command or Law from God*; the one is, *where God himself speaks to the Person immediately and directly*, the other is, *where the moral Reason or Fitness of the thing is proposed or manifested to the Person or Persons concerned at the same time with the Law or Command*, *p.* 90. And he expressly saith, *p.* 84. *if God speaks to me immediately and directly, I believe him upon his own Authority.* Where he both owns that God may speak or communicate a thing to the Mind *immediately and directly*, and that where he doth so, what is thus revealed is to be believed by the Person to whom it is immediately communicated, upon his *Authority*, that is, because he reveals it. He illustrates this by an Instance, which he saith *will come up exactly* to the purpose. He puts the case of a mathematical Proposition, being communicated to one Man by immediate Revelation, to another Man by

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by its proper Evidence, or by its being plainly demonstrated to him from the *natural necessary Relation and Connection of the Ideas themselves*. And he saith, that the one may be as certain of it as the other. He who hath it *immediately revealed to him from God*, tho' we should suppose *he knew nothing, and could know nothing of it as a Truth necessarily founded in Nature*, yet would be as certain of it as he who received it upon the Evidence of mathematical Demonstration; *because he would connect the certain Truth of the Proposition, with the necessary Veracity of God*: tho' he could not communicate that Certainty which he himself had to others, *see pag. 82, 83*. Here he seemeth plainly to assert that the Person to whom God is pleased to make known a Truth by way of immediate Inspiration, may be certainly assured that God doth thus reveal it to him: and that in this case, tho' he doth not by his own Reason apprehend the necessary Connection of the Terms, or the natural Fitness of the Thing itself, he receiveth it upon the Authority of God who reveals it: And that this Authority or Revelation from God affordeth a Certainty to the Mind equal to that arising from a mathematical Demonstration. So that here he plainly supposeth in direct Contradiction to what he elsewhere asserts, that the moral Reason and Fitness of the Thing as appearing to the mind, is not the *sole Evidence or Criterion* of a Doctrine as coming from God: but that immediate Revelation may be a just and certain Ground of a Person's believing a thing to be true, and to come from God, distinct from the apprehended Reason and Fitness of the thing itself: and that upon the Authority of that Revelation, the Person to whom the Revelation is originally and immediately made, may receive it as true and as coming from God, tho' the Fitness of it in itself be not made evident to him by any Reasons drawn from the Nature of the Thing. And if a thing's being revealed from God, be a sufficient
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ground of Certainty to the Person himself to whom the original Revelation is immediately made, distinct from the Proofs brought of its Truth from the Reason of the Thing, then it must be so to others too in Proportion to the Assurance they have, that it is a Revelation from God. So that if there be any way of ascertaining others, besides those to whom the Revelation is originally and immediately made, that any Doctrine or Law is by Revelation from God, they are obliged to believe and receive it on that account, as of divine Authority, tho' they cannot prove it to be necessarily true by Arguments drawn from the Reason of the Thing independent of that Authority.

This leads me to the second Question that was proposed to be considered; with regard to which I lay down this Proposition: That there may be such Proofs and Evidences given that the Persons professing to have received Doctrines and Laws from God for the Use of Mankind, were indeed sent and inspired by him, and did receive them by Revelation from him; such Proofs and Evidences as make it reasonable for those to whom they are made known, to receive such Laws and Doctrines as of divine Authority: In which case to refuse to believe those Doctrines, and to submit to those Laws, would be a very criminal Conduct, and a manifest Breach of the Duty that reasonable Creatures owe to the supreme Being. This is the proper Question in debate. For tho' this Writer pretends not to deny that the Persons to whom the original Revelation is immediately made, may be certain that they themselves received it by immediate Revelation from God himself, yet he denies that they have any way of proving to others that it is a Revelation from God, except by proving the Reasonableness of the thing itself: which is to say, that they have no way of proving to others that it came by divine Revelation at all. For as I have already

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observed the Reasonableness of a Doctrine or Law will never alone prove that the Man that teacheth that Doctrine, or bringeth that Law, had it by immediate Revelation from God. This must be proved, if it be proved at all, by other Evidences.

It will be easily granted that Persons being themselves persuaded that they have received any thing from God by immediate Revelation, is not of itself a sufficient Reason to others to ingage them to receive it as such; and that if we had only their own Words for it without any other Proof, we could not take this for a proper Evidence without laying ourselves open to the Delusions of Enthusiasts and Impostors. The Question then is, whether abstracting from the Credit and Testimony of the Persons themselves to whom the original Revelation is made, there may not be Proofs and Evidences given sufficient to convince others that they were indeed sent of God, and that what they publish as from God, and in his Name, is indeed a Revelation from him.

Now let us suppose that a Person professeth to have received Doctrines and Laws by Revelation from God, for the Instruction and Direction of Mankind, and that accordingly he urgeth Men to believe those Doctrines, and submit to those Laws as of divine Authority. And let us suppose that such Person appeareth as far as can be judged from his whole Conduct, to be one of great Probity and Sincerity, animated with a hearty Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind; and also that the Doctrines he teacheth, and the Laws he giveth as from God, have nothing in them contrary to true Piety and Virtue, but rather have a Tendency to promote it. This forms a strong Prejudice in his Favour, but doth not alone prove that he received those Doctrines and Laws by Revelation from God himself. But if that Person is farther enabled as a Testimony of his divine Mission,

to perform Works of so wonderful a Nature, so grand, so glorious, as manifestly and undeniably transcend all the Power and Skill of any Man, or all the Men upon Earth, and therefore evidently argue a supernatural Interposition. And if this is done not merely in a single Instance or two, in which Case let the Fact be ever so extraordinary and above all the Power of Man, yet it might be suspected that it was only some strange thing that had happened without a particular View to the Establishment of any Doctrines or Laws; I say, let us suppose a marvellous Concurrence of many such amazing and extraordinary Acts of Power and Dominion, of such a kind as naturally and almost unavoidably lead us to consider them as proceeding from the Sovereign Lord and Governour of the World, and of Mankind; and that for a Course of Years together, all plainly wrought in Attestation and Evidence of that Person's divine Mission, and in Confirmation of that Scheme of Doctrines and Laws which he delivered to the World as from God, and without ever being controlled or overruled by any superiour Evidence. I think it is very reasonable in such a Case to regard him as sent of God, and to receive the Doctrines and Laws he delivereth in the Name of God, and which come to us thus attested and confirmed, as the Doctrines and Laws of God. For supposing those Miracles to be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced as that either none but God can do them, or at least to be such that it can never be supposed, that a wise and good Providence would suffer them to be done in Attestation of an Imposture*, the doing such

C Miracles

* I will grant, that God is not obliged by his Providence, to hinder every thing that may in Fact seduce Men from the Truth. He is not obliged to hinder cunning Impostors from employing their Arts of Subtilty to deceive, or to hinder evil Beings from attempting to seduce Mankind, or from sometimes

doing

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Miracles in proof of such Doctrines and Laws, is really a divine Testimony to those Doctrines and Laws as coming from God. And in every such case we cannot be said to receive the Doctrines and Laws thus attested and confirmed upon the Word of Men, or upon the sole Credit and Authority of the Person professing to be extraordinaryly sent and inspired, but we receive them upon the Testimony and Authority of God himself. And supposing God in his great Goodness to have really designed to give an extraordinary Revelation of Doctrines and Laws for the Use of Mankind, and to send a Person or Persons to publish them in his Name, it is scarce possible to conceive what stronger Proofs could be given of the divine Mission of that Person or Persons, and the divine Authority of such Doctrines and Laws, than such a Series and Succession of glorious uncontrolled Miracles, as we are now supposing.

But the Force of this will more fully appear when particularly applied to the Miracles that were done at the first Establishment of the Jewish and Christian Dispensation.

doing things that may appear strange and miraculous. But this I say, that there may be Miracles supposed of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, and which carry in them such glorious Indications of a divine Power and Dominion, that it cannot reasonably be reconciled to the Notion of an infinitely wise and good Mind presiding over the Affairs of Men, to suppose that they should be suffered to be wrought in Attestation of an Imposture, especially for a Succession of Years together, without ever being controlled by superior Miracles, or contrary Evidence. So that the Question here doth not properly proceed concerning all Miracles in general, whether all Kinds of Miracles are Proofs of Doctrines as coming from God: but whether Miracles may not be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, for Number, Grandeur, and Continuance, as to yield a sufficient Attestation to the divine Mission of the Persons by whom, and to the divine Original of the Doctrines, in confirmation of which, they were wrought: and particularly, whether the Miracles wrought in confirmation of the *Mosaic* and *Christian* Dispensation were not such.

Let us suppose that the Miracles were really wrought that are recorded to have been wrought by *Moses*, the Question is whether those Miracles and wonderful Works which he performed were a sufficient Proof of his divine Mission, and made it reasonable for them that saw those Miracles to receive the Doctrines and Laws he published as from God. And I think, a bare representation of them would go a great way to determine this Question. It is evident, that supposing the amazing and stupendous Works done by the Ministry of *Moses* in *Egypt*, at the *Red Sea*, and in the *Wilderness*, the Promulgation of the Law at *Sinai*, the feeding the People with *Manna* for forty Years together, &c. and the signal Judgments inflicted on those that opposed his Authority and Laws; supposing these Things to have been really done as they are represented, they were far above all the Power of Man, and seemed to argue such a Dominion over Nature as is proper to the supreme universal Lord. And it is also evident that the Being, in whose Name, and by whose Power these Things were done, who gave these Laws, and brought the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, all along assumed the Character and peculiar Prerogatives of the supreme God, the independent *Jehovah*, and claimed their highest Love, Reverence, Adoration, and Obedience to himself alone, in exclusion of all other Deities. To suppose that he who gave forth those Laws, and by whose Power these great and astonishing Things were effected, was an evil Being, would be the greatest of Absurdities. Can it be thought that a wise and good God would thus suffer an evil Being to assume his Character, and set up for the Creator and Lord of the Universe, and require to be acknowledged and adored as such, and to confirm this his Claim by such a Series of the most glorious and stupendous Works as must almost unavoidably lead all that beheld them to acknowledge a divine Hand,

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and not only to give forth Laws with the most amazing Solemnity in the Name of the universal Lord, but to inflict the most awful Judgments upon those that refused to submit to those Laws, and acknowledge him as their Lord; and thus bring them under a kind of Necessity of being deluded or submitting to the falsely usurped Authority? Can we think that the supreme Being would look on all the while with Indifferency, and suffer an evil Being thus to personate him, and to abuse and deceive his Creatures, and take no care, by any superior Miracles or contrary Evidence, to overrule and detect the Imposture? This appears to me to be absolutely inconsistent with all the Notions of a wise and good Providence presiding over the World, and the Affairs of Mankind. It is not to be accounted for upon any other Supposition than that of an almighty evil Principle, acting independently of the good God, and not at all under his Control.

But if this cannot be supposed without the greatest Absurdity, then it must be said, that it was God himself immediately, or which comes to the same thing, by the Agency of subordinate good Beings superior to Man, acting under him as his Instruments, and according to his Will, that wrought those wonderful Works in Attestation of *Moses's* divine Mission, and the Laws he gave in the Name of God. And then I think it cannot be denied, that those Laws thus attested were to be received as coming from God, and to have refused to submit to them in these Circumstances, and after all these glorious Attestations would have been to rebel against God, and to resist the divine Authority: and consequently would have been a very unjustifiable and criminal Conduct, highly displeasing to the supreme Being. And those who upon the Credit of such illustrious Attestations believed his divine Mission, and received the Revelation he brought, and the Laws he gave,

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as from God, could not in that Case be said to believe him merely upon his own Word, or to receive those Doctrines and Laws upon his sole Credit and Authority, but upon a divine Testimony, and upon the Authority of God.

The Argument is still stronger when applied to the Miracles wrought by *Christ* and his *Apostles*. Let us suppose that the Facts as represented in the Gospel are true, concerning Christ's healing the most obstinate and incurable Diseases, of many Years continuance, in an instant; restoring the Blind and Lame, casting out Devils, commanding the Winds and the Sea, feeding five thousand at once with five Loaves and two Fishes, and even raising the Dead; but especially his own Resurrection from the Dead, Ascension into Heaven, and the consequent Effusion of the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary Gifts and Powers, whereby his Disciples were enabled to perform the most astonishing Miracles like to those which he himself had performed whilst on Earth: and all these Things done in a vast variety of Instances, and for a long Course of Years together in his Name, and in Attestation of his divine Mission, and the Scheme of Laws and Doctrines he introduced: I say, supposing all these things to have been really done as they are recorded in the New Testament, I think they form the strongest Proof that can be supposed in Favour of the Doctrines and Laws so attested. They evidently transcended all human Power and Skill, and must therefore have been wrought by the Assistance and Power of a superior Being or Beings. And this could not be an evil Being: not only because many of the Works themselves are of such a Nature, that it can scarce be supposed that an evil Being could have it in his Power or Inclination to perform them: but because it can hardly be thought that the wise and righteous Governor of the World would suffer an evil Being

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or Beings, to give such a Series of glorious Attestations bearing the illustrious Characters of Divinity upon them, in Favour of Doctrines and Laws falsely pretended to be given by him, without ever controlling or overruling them by any superior Evidence: And lastly, because it would be to the last degree absurd, to imagine that an evil Being should ever exert his Power in such an extraordinary Manner to confirm a Revelation pretending to come from God, the principal Design and manifest Tendency of which was to recover Men from Idolatry, Vice and Wickedness, to the Knowledge and Love of God, and the Practice of Piety, Righteousness, and Virtue. It followeth, therefore, that they must have been wrought by the immediate Agency of God himself, or by some good Being or Beings superior to Man, acting under him, and by his Direction and Influence. And this being the Case, either it must be said that the Person in Attestation of whose divine Mission all these marvellous Things were done, was indeed, as he professed himself, to be extraordinarily sent of God, and that the Scheme of Religion, that is, of Doctrines and Laws, in Confirmation of which they were wrought, was indeed true and of divine Authority: Or it must be said that God himself gave his own Power, or good Beings acting under his Direction lent their Assistance, and that in a Series of the most astonishing Instances, and for a Succession of Years together, to give Testimony to a Falseness and Imposture, and to put a Cheat upon Mankind in the Name of God. A Supposition which is not consistent with the Belief of a God and a Providence.

Thus I think it appeareth, that Miracles may be supposed of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to afford a sufficient Attestation to the divine Mission of the Person in favour of whom, and to the Truth and divine Original of the Doctrines and Laws, in confirmation of which they were wrought.

And

And that particularly, supposing the Things to have been really done, that are recorded to have been done at the first Establishment of the Jewish and Christian Dispensation, they yielded a full Attestation to the divine Mission of *Moses* and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Scheme or System of Doctrines and Laws published by them in the Name of God. The Evidence was not put upon a single Wonder or two, however extraordinary and glorious, but there was a marvellous Series and Succession of wonderful Acts and supernatural Attestations to strengthen the Evidence, and put it beyond all reasonable Doubt. For all the Miracles done not only by *Moses*, but the succeeding Prophets, centred in proving his divine Mission, and the Authority of the Laws he gave as from God; since all the subsequent Revelations by the Prophets in the Old Testament still supposed the Authority of the Law of *Moses*, and gave an additional Attestation to it. And in like manner all the Miracles done by Christ himself, and by his Apostles and Disciples after him, had one main view to which they were all directed, that is, to confirm the divine Mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Truth and divine Authority of the Doctrines and Laws which he introduced; So that each of these Schemes of Revelation was confirmed by a Series of the most illustrious Attestations. And besides this, each of them gave Testimony to the other. *Moses* and the Prophets foretold the Coming and Glory of *Christ*, and the new Dispensation he was to introduce, and prepared the World for it. And Jesus confirmed by his Testimony the divine Mission of *Moses* and the Prophets. So that in this view, all the Attestations given to both, really contributed to confirm the divine Original and Authority of each of them. And all together form an Evidence so great and so strong, the like of which cannot possibly be produced in favour of

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any other System of Doctrines and Laws, and which it cannot reasonably be supposed could ever have been given; or that a wise and good Providence would have suffered it to be given to an Imposture.

I shall now proceed to consider what this Writer objects against the Proof from Miracles. What he offers on this Head is of no great Weight, tho' advanced with an uncommon air of Confidence. He urges that "there will be always two very strong " Objections against such an Argument as this " when applied to Religion. First, that it would " be a hard Matter to prove the thing as un- " exceptionably true in fact, or that the first Re- " port and Belief of it did not arise from Ig- " norance, Presumption, Prejudice, &c. And in " the next Place, that no Consequence can be " drawn from any such thing, supposing it ever so " true, and clearly proved in Fact," p. 345. As to the first, I do not see but Miracles supposing them to be Facts obvious to the Senses, done in open view, and even in the view of Enemies themselves concerned and zealous to detect an Imposture, are as capable of being proved as any other Facts whatsoever: And that both those that at first were Eye-witnesses to them might be as sure of them, as Men can be of any thing which they themselves hear and see, and for which they have the Testimony of their Senses; and those that have the Accounts transmitted to them, may have them transmitted in such a Manner, and with such Evidence, that it would be an unreasonable Incredulity to doubt of them. This must be allowed, unless Men are resolved not to believe any Accounts of Facts done in former Ages. And it might be easily shewn, and hath been often proved, that the Miracles done at the first Establishment of the *Mosaic* and *Christian* Dispensation were of this kind. As to what he adds, and which is the only present Question,

Question, that supposing the Facts ever so true, no Consequence can be drawn from them in favour of any Religion, the Reasons he there offers are very weak. The first is, that *it is certain that the Being and moral Perfections of God, and the natural Relations of Man to him as his reasonable Creature, and the Subject of his moral Government, cannot depend upon the Truth or Falshood of any historical Facts, or upon our forming a right or wrong Judgment concerning them.* This is very oddly expressed. Nobody pretends that the Being of a God, or the natural Relations between him and us, depend upon Miracles. But a Revelation from God, containing a clearer Discovery of his glorious Perfections, of his Nature and Will, and of the Obligations incumbent upon us towards him, &c. may be attested by Miracles in such a manner as to give the World convincing Proofs that it is indeed a true divine Revelation, and to be depended on as such. And then, upon the Credit of that Revelation, we may come to know several Things relating to these Subjects, which we could not have known at all, or not with Certainty without it. The second Reason he there offers is, that he hath already prov'd, *that the Characteristick of moral Truth and Righteousness is the only sure Mark or Criterion of any Doctrine or Practice as coming from God, and divinely authorized.* I do not know in what part of his Book he hath proved this, except we take strong Assertions for Proofs. But this Pretence hath been examined already: and is in Effect no more than a confident affirming that there can be no external Proofs of divine Revelation, which is the very Point in Question.

But there are some other Things he offers to invalidate the Proof from Miracles. He asserts, that "It is plain, that the Power of working Miracles had no Connection with the Truth of the Doctrines taught by such Miracle-workers, because

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“ cause false Prophets, and the most wicked Se-
 “ ducers, might and did work Miracles, which
 “ they could not have done, had Miracles been
 “ any Evidence or Proof of Truth and sound
 “ Doctrine.” p. 81. This he hath over again, p.
 98, where he urges, that “ False Prophets, and
 “ the most wicked Seducers, and even the Devil
 “ himself, may work Miracles; and therefore,
 “ Miracles alone considered can prove nothing at
 “ all, and ought to have no Weight or Influence
 “ with any Body.” *

But if there may be Miracles of such a Nature,
 and so circumstanced, that no Seducer can ever e-
 qual them, and it cannot be supposed they could
 ever be done, or at least that God would suffer
 them to be done in Attestation of an Imposture,
 then the Evidence from such Miracles, so circum-
 stanced, still holds good, notwithstanding what
 this Writer here offers to the contrary. And this
 hath been already shewn with Regard to the Mira-
 cles wrought in Confirmation of the Jewish and
 Christian Dispensation. I will grant that Seducers
 may, by human Art and Skill, be supposed to do
 Things that appear very strange and unaccountable,
 and set the People a wondering; and that they
 may do yet stranger Things, supposing the Agen-
 cy and Assistance of evil Spirits; but still we may
 be sure, from the Wisdom and Goodness of divine
 Providence, that the Miracles wrought by the As-
 sistance of his Spirit, and in Confirmation of a
 Revelation which he gives to Mankind, shall be
 of such a Nature, as shall in their Number, their
 Grandeur, and Continuance, beyond all Comparison
 transcend, whatever were or shall be wrought in fa-
 vour of any Imposture. There have been two Systems
 of Doctrines and Laws really given by divine Re-

* See this Objection more fully considered, *Answer to Chri-
 stianity as old as the Creation.* Part II. from p. 72 to 92.

velation, the Mosaical and the Christian; and God took Care, in his great Wisdom and Goodness, that each of them should be attended with such an Abundance of extraordinary Attestations, as no Imposture was ever attended with, and no Skill or Power of Deceivers could ever affect.

Moses indeed makes a Supposition of a false Prophet's working a Sign or Wonder to seduce the People from the Worship of the true God, and warns them in that Case not to regard him, nor to suffer themselves to be deceived by him. This is a strong Way of putting the Case, to shew that on no Account whatsoever they should suffer themselves to be drawn to Idolatry. But certainly he never did suppose that any false Prophet should be able to produce such a Series of miraculous Attestations, in Confirmation of any false Doctrine or idolatrous Worship, as could in any wise come in Competition with those which were wrought at the Establishment and for Confirmation of the Laws, which he gave them in the Name of God. On the contrary, he all along supposes that as there was no God save the Lord, so neither were there any Works to be compared to his Works; and he appeals to these Works as the manifest Proofs of his unequalled Sovereignty and Glory, and of the divine Original and Authority of that Law which they were designed to confirm and to establish.

Under the New Testament our Saviour speaks of false Prophets, and false Christs, that should arise, and *shew great Signs and Wonders*. Matt. xxiv. 5, 6, 24. This plainly relates to the false Prophets and Seducers that arose among the *Jews*, a little before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, whom *Josephus* represents as Magicians and Sorcerers, or Jugglers, [*μαῖοι ὡ γοῦρῆς*] and who, he tells us, pretended to divine Inspiration, and promised the People to do wonderful Things for them. But it is certain, none of their pretended Wonders could
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in any wise be compared to those which our Saviour himself (the true Messiah) wrought. Nor could he intend by these Words to signify, that they would do as great Things as he himself had done, since he so often appeals to his wonderful Works, as the uncontested Proofs of his divine Mission. So he saith, *John v. 36. The Works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* And *John x. 37, 38. If I do not the Works of my Father believe me not; but if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.* And again, *John xv. 24. If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had sin.* And *John x. 24, 25. When the Jews said unto him, If thou be the Christ tell us plainly? Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witness of me.* See also *John xiv. 11.* From hence St. Peter represents Jesus of Nazareth as approved of God, [*ἐκδοδεσµένον*] demonstrated, as the Word properly signifies, by *Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midst of them.* *Acts ii. 22.* It could never therefore be our Saviour's Design to signify, that any of the false Prophets and Seducers among the Jews, should do Miracles that could in any Measure be compared to his own. And it is certain in Fact, that they did not: They pretended to foretel Things to come, and the Event soon confuted them, and shewed the Vanity of their Pretences. They pretended to do great Wonders, but they might properly be called *lying Wonders.* For tho' they had the Art of seducing great Numbers of People, they and their Works soon perished, and the Falshood and Imposture of them soon appeared.

As to what the Author supposeth concerning the Apostles opposing Miracles to Miracles, in Confirmation

firmation of their different Schemes of Christianity, this shall be considered afterwards, when I come to examine his Objections against the New Testament. At present I shall only say that it may be proved with the clearest Evidence, that the Apostles of our Lord taught one and the same uniform harmonious Scheme of Doctrines, the same Gospel to which God *bore witness with Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*: And that the false Teachers in that Age could never produce any Thing in Attestation of their false Doctrines, that could in the least be compared to the illustrious Evidences and Proofs brought by the Apostles to confirm the Gospel which they preached.

Another Thing he offers to shew that Miracles can be no Proof, is this, that the *Power of working Miracles* did not make the Workers of them either infallible, or impeccable; raise them above the Possibility of being deceived themselves in their inward Judgment, or of deceiving others in the outward Sentence and Declaration of that Judgment *. p. 80, 83, 93. But it appears that the Proof or Evidence from Miracles, as already stated, hath not properly any Thing to do with the Fallibility

* Our Author, when he here speaks of the *Power of working Miracles*, seems to have a particular Reference to the Gift of Miracles communicated by the Holy Ghost, in the first Age of Christianity; which he understands as if it were a permanent Habit residing in the Person, to be used at Pleasure, whenever he thought fit, like a natural Faculty or Habit; which therefore might be used by him, either for confirming Truth or Falshood. But this is a very great Mistake: That Power of working Miracles was not a Power of doing them whenever the Persons themselves pleased. They could then only work Miracles, when it seemed fit to the Divine Wisdom they should do them for valuable Ends. And it cannot be supposed that God who gave them this Power on Purpose to confirm the Truth, would enable them to exercise it to confirm a Falshood. But concerning this see below, *Chap. XIII.* where this is more largely considered.

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or Infallibility, the Peccability or Impeccability, of the Person in himself considered, by whom these Miracles are wrought. For in that Case, the Credit of his having received a Revelation from God, doth not merely depend upon his own Word, or Veracity, or Integrity; upon which Supposition it might be said, that the Word of fallible and peccable Men was not intirely to be depended on; but it depends upon a real Proof, distinct from his Word, and independent of it, *viz.* upon the Testimony given by God himself, to his divine Mission and Inspiration, and to the Laws he publisheth to the World in his Name. And we may be sure, that however fallible Men are in themselves, yet if God sends them on purpose to deliver Doctrines and Laws to Mankind, as by Revelation from him, and enables them, in Confirmation of them, to perform such a Series of illustrious Miracles as we are now supposing, he will also assist them in communicating those Doctrines and Laws, so as to preserve them from Error in delivering them.

This will appear in a just Light, if applied to the Cases already mentioned. *Moses* professed to be extraordinarily sent of God, and to have received Laws by Revelation from him, which Laws he delivered to the People in his Name. In Confirmation of this his Mission, he performed a Number of the most extraordinary Miracles, for a Succession of Years together, of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, that they bore upon them the evident Characters of a divine Interposition, and could never be supposed to have been done, or that God would suffer them to be done, in Favour of an Imposture. Now this being the Case, it is nothing to the Purpose, whether we suppose *Moses* to have been fallible and peccable in himself or not. Let us grant him to have been in himself fallible, or capable of being deceived and imposed upon: Yet we have a sufficient Assurance that he

was not actually deceived in this Case. If by an enthusiastick Heat he had only imagined himself to be inspired, and to have received those Laws by immediate Revelation from God, this Conceit of his would never have enabled him to perform such a Series of the most stupendous Works above all the Art of Man, or Power of Enthusiasm. And his doing such Things manifestly proved that his divine Mission was not the Delusion of his own misguided Imagination, but a glorious Reality: And that he did not merely fancy himself sent and inspired of God, but that he really was so.

Again, let us suppose that he was *peccable*, that is, that he was capable of forming a design to deceive the People, and of putting his own Inventions upon them for divine Revelations (tho' I think *Moses's* excellent Character will scarce suffer us to suppose that he was capable of carrying on a deliberate solemn Cheat and Imposture, in the Name of God himself; but let us suppose him to have been capable of such a Design, yet it is evident that in this Case he did not impose upon them, and that the Laws he gave them, as from God, and in his Name, were indeed the Laws of God, and not merely his own Inventions; because God himself, in the Manner already mentioned, bore witness to those Laws. And whatever Designs *Moses* might be capable of, yet God himself, or good Beings superior to Man, acting under his Influence and Direction, by whose Assistance alone Works so circumstanced could be supposed to be done, would never have joined with him in carrying on the Imposture, and giving Attestation to a Lie. And this Way of reasoning may be urged with still greater Force, when applied to the Revelation brought by our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Apostles. Whereas therefore this Writer frequently argues, that we cannot take Miracles for a *Proof or Evidence of Doctrines without exposing ourselves*

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to all the Enthusiasm and Imposture in the World, it is manifest, that we can run no Hazard of this by receiving Doctrines and Laws as coming from God, that have been confirmed by such a Series of extraordinary miraculous Attestations, as were those given to the Mosaical and Christian Revelation. Because they were of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as no Imposture was ever attended with, and no Art of Deceivers, or Power of Enthusiasm can ever effect. Such a Revelation once given, and so gloriously attested, where it is steadily believed and adhered to, is one of the best Preservatives against being led astray by the Deceptions of Enthusiasts and Impostors.

What our Author offers to shew that Miracles can be no Proof of *positive* Precepts, tho' produced with great Pomp, (for he pretends to state the Question with greater Accuracy than hath been hitherto done, and tells us, that the Question is not concerning God's Right of instituting such Precepts which he doth not deny, but concerning the Way of knowing when God gives such Commands, see p. 87, &c. I say, the Force of all that he offers on this Head) depends entirely upon what he so often asserts, but never proves, viz. that moral Truth and Fitness is the *only* Proof and Evidence of any Doctrine or Law, as coming from God: From whence he argues, that Precepts concerning Matters of a ritual and positive Nature cannot be proved to come from God, as not being necessarily founded in the Nature and Fitness of Things. He therefore compares such Commands, to Commands pretended to be sent from Parents or Masters to their Children or Servants, but which do not come to them under their own Hand and Seal, and may for that Reason be disregarded. But if we must keep to the Author's Comparison, why may not God's giving us Laws by Persons, whom he hath sent and authorized for

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that Purpose, and to whom he hath given sufficient Credentials, by confirming the Message they bring by numerous uncontrolled Miracles; why may not this be compared to a Parent or Master's sending Directions or Orders to his Children and Servants, by Messengers under his own Hand and Seal, in which Case he allows that they are obliged to conform to those Orders, tho' they do not know the particular Reasons of them? Yea Miracles may be supposed to be of such a Nature, that the Proof arising from them may be stronger than what ariseth meerly from a Man's own Hand and Seal. For it is possible, that a Man's Hand and Seal may be so exactly counterfeited, that no Person upon comparing them, may be able to discern the Difference between the genuine and the counterfeit, not even the Person himself whose Hand is counterfeited, any farther than that by other Means he may know that he did not write it, and that he gave no such Orders. But Miracles may be supposed of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, and raised so far above all Competition and Parallel, that no Deceivers can work the like, nor have been ever able, or can be supposed to be able so to imitate them, but that upon carefully examining and comparing them, we may easily see a vast Difference. If therefore a Man's giving Orders under his own Hand and Seal, be allowed to be a sufficient Notification of his Will and Pleasure, and maketh it reasonable for his Children and Servants to obey those Orders, tho' it is not impossible they may be counterfeited; then the Command of God coming to us, confirmed with the Attestation of Miracles, of such a Nature as no Imposture was ever attended with, (and such I have shewn were the Miracles wrought at the Establishment of the Jewish and Christian Dispensation) is a sufficient Ground for our yielding Obedience to such Commands. And our not apprehending the

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Things

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Things required to be in themselves antecedently necessary in their own Nature, cannot be a sufficient Reason for our rejecting them; because upon this Supposition, they come to us upon the Authority or Testimony of God himself, who by the Author's own Concession, hath a Right of commanding us in Things of a positive Nature.

It ought to be observed, that at the same Time that this Writer doth all he can to shew that Miracles can be no Proof at all of any Doctrine or Revelation, as coming from God, he would not be thought to insinuate, that Miracles are of no Use, and can serve to no Purpose at all in Religion. He saith that *Miracles, especially if wrought for the Good of Mankind, and with a visible Regard for their Interest and Happiness, are perhaps the most effectual Means of removing Prejudices, and procuring Attention to what is delivered*, p. 98, 99. But I do not see how this can be made to consist upon his Scheme. If it be supposed that Miracles can in any Case be so circumstanced, as to yield a sufficient Attestation to the divine Mission of the Person who is enabled to work these Miracles, and to the Truth and Divinity of the Doctrines and Precepts that are confirmed by these Miracles; then when I see a Person performing such extraordinary Works, above all the Power of Man, this will naturally command and engage my Attention to what he delivers. But if it be supposed, that they can never be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to give any Attestation to the divine Mission of any Person, or to the Truth and divine Original of any Doctrine, I can see no Reason why I should attend to a Doctrine more for being accompanied with Miracles, than if it were not so, or why I should concern myself about Miracles at all; because if ever so true or good, they can give no Attestation, and furnish no Proof; or as this Writer expresseth it, *Can prove nothing* at

at all, and ought to have no Weight or Influence with any Body.

All the Use he is pleased to assign for the Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles is, that They tended to convince the People, that they were no Enemies to God, and to their Country; and disposed them coolly and soberly to consider the Nature and Tendency of the Doctrines they had to propose to them; but that they were not designed for a Proof of the Truth or Divinity of those Doctrines. See p. 98. But does not our Saviour himself frequently and plainly appeal to the wonderful Works he wrought, as the proper Evidences of his divine Mission, and as bearing witness to him, and to his Doctrine? Does not he often expressly put the Proof upon this, and suppose it to be a Proof so strong as would leave the Jews utterly inexcusable if they did not believe him? And the Effect these Miracles properly had upon those that attended to them is well expressed by Nicodemus, *We know that thou art a Teacher sent from God; for no Man can do these Miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* John iii. 2. Nor had the Pharisees any other Way of avoiding the Force of this, than by saying, that he did his Miracles by the Assistance of the Devil: A Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour pronounces never to be forgiven, as being the most obstinate and malicious Opposition to divine Truth, and a resisting the utmost Evidence.

This may be sufficient to shew what Assurance those, who themselves were Witnesses to such a Series of miraculous Attestations, might have of that Doctrine or Law coming from God, which they beheld thus attested and confirmed. But there is another Thing that deserves to be considered, and that is, what reasonable Ground of Assurance they may also have of a Doctrine or Law coming from God, who did not themselves see those Miracles

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cles whereby it was attested and confirmed, or did not live in the Age when those Miracles were wrought. Can it be reasonable for such to receive Doctrines and Laws as of divine Authority, upon the Evidence of Miracles which they themselves were not Eye-witnesses of? In Answer to this, I think it cannot be reasonably denied, that supposing Miracles may be so circumstanced, as to be in themselves a sufficient Proof to those that saw them, then they are also a sufficient Proof to others, in Proportion to the Assurance they have, that those Miracles were really done. So that the Question is reduced to this; whether there may be such Evidence given of Miracles done in former Ages, as make it reasonable for those that live in succeeding Ages to believe, and be persuaded, that those Miracles were wrought? For if so, then, supposing Miracles to be a Proof, they are obliged to believe that the Doctrines and Laws which were attested by these Miracles came originally by Revelation from God, and are to be received as of divine Authority. Now this depends upon another Question, and that is, whether in any Case we can have sufficient Assurance of Facts which we ourselves did not see, or which were done in former Ages? It is not sufficient to prove Things uncertain, and not to be depended upon, to say that we have them by *human* Tradition and Testimony, that is, by the Testimony of Men that are neither infallible nor impeccable. For human Tradition and Testimony may be so circumstanced as to yield sufficient Assurance, that those Facts were done in past Ages, or such Laws enacted: And therefore the Man that should doubt of them, and give no other Reason for his doubting, or rejecting them, but this, That they came by human Tradition and Testimony, would only render himself ridiculous.

This

This Author, to shew the Insufficiency of Tradition, for conveying Doctrines and Laws of Religion, is pleased to compare it to a Parent or Master's writing *to another Person, and he to a third, and the third to a fourth, and so on to the hundredth or thousandth Hand, which Orders were at last come to his Family, about something of near Interest and Concern between him and them.* In this Case it is said that Children and Servants would not be justly blamed, if they should *suspend* their Obedience, till they *heard from him in a more direct and unexceptionable Way.* p. 88, 89. But this Instance doth not at all come up to the Point. The Case should be put thus, Supposing Laws to have been enacted in former Ages, and those Laws committed to Writing, the Question is, whether those Laws may not be transmitted to Posterity with such Evidence, that we may have Assurance, sufficient to convince any reasonable Person, that those Laws were really enacted, and that these are the very Laws? And whether it would be esteemed a good Reason, or accepted as a proper Excuse, for doubting of the Authority of those Laws, or refusing Obedience to them, that we our selves did not *live* in the Age when those Laws were made; and that they are transmitted to us through the Hands of Persons capable of an Intention to deceive us, or of being themselves deceived. Again, supposing Facts to have been done in former Ages of considerable Importance, and those Facts recorded at the Time in which they were done, the Question is, Whether they may not be transmitted to us in authentick *Records*, with such Evidence, that it would be perfectly unreasonable to doubt of them; and whether it would diminish the Credit of them, that the Writings which contain an Account of those Facts, have been spread through many Hands, often transcribed, dispersed among different Nations,

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and translated into various Languages ? One would think, by our Author's Manner of representing it, that he intended to insinuate, that this would render the Accounts uncertain ; whereas there being many Copies of them is a much greater Security than if there were but a few extant.

It cannot be denied, that Laws had originally from *Revelation*, are as capable of being transmitted to Posterity as any other Laws ; and miraculous *Facts*, done in Attestation of those Laws, may be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to be capable of being transmitted to succeeding Ages, as well as any other Facts. If therefore, it be allowed that any Laws, or Facts, may be so transmitted, that those who live in after Ages may have a reasonable Assurance, sufficient to convince them, that these are the very Laws which were enacted, and that these Facts were really done ; then it must also be allowed, that the Laws which came originally by Revelation, and the Facts whereby those Laws were attested and confirmed, may be transmitted to us in such a Manner, and with such a Degree of Evidence, that we cannot reasonably doubt of their being the very Laws which were originally published by Revelation from God, and that those miraculous Facts were really wrought. If we refuse to receive those Laws or believe those Facts, because we ourselves did not see them, or live in the Age when the Laws were first given, and the Facts were done, though they come to us transmitted with such Evidence as we ourselves would count sufficient, in any other Case ; this is certainly a most unreasonable Conduct, and will hardly be justified to the great Governor of the World. To insist upon it, that those Laws should be again promulgated, in the Manner in which they were published at first, and that the extraordinary miraculous Facts wrought in Attestation of them, should be done over again in every

every Age, and in every Nation, for the Satisfaction of every single Person; (for one Man in one Age and one Country, hath as much Right to expect and demand it as another) would be a most absurd demand; it would be unbecoming the divine Wisdom to grant them: And indeed, such extraordinary Attestations, by being continually repeated, would cease to be extraordinary, and be regarded no more than common Things, and so would lose their Force. It is enough that they are transmitted to us in such a Manner, and with such Evidence, that it would be perfectly unreasonable to doubt whether these are the very Laws that were originally given as from God, and whether these Facts were really done. And it might easily be proved, and hath been often shewn, that the *Scripture* Laws and Doctrines, and the Facts whereby they were attested and confirmed, are transmitted to us with an Evidence that scarce any other Laws, or any other Facts done in former Ages, were ever attended with *.

Our Author himself doth not deny, that “ A
“ Matter of Revelation is as capable of being
“ conveyed down to Posterity as any other Mat-
“ ter of Fact, of what Nature or Kind soever,
“ and that either this must be allowed, or we must
“ reject all historical Evidence of every other
“ Kind. But then he saith, that he must still in-
“ sist upon it, that no Reason or Proof can be
“ given of any Revelation as coming from God,
“ but the moral Fitness and Reasonableness of
“ the Thing itself, in its own Nature, antecedent
“ to, and abstracted from, any such Tradition or
“ human Testimony; and consequently, that Tra-
“ dition or human Testimony is here brought in,
“ to no Manner of Purpose, and without Effect.”

* See to this Purpose, *Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation*, Part II. Chap. IV. V. VI.

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p. 85. This Writer often puts me in mind of what he is pleased to say, concerning the *common Run of our enthusiastic Pulpiteers, whose Manner* he tells us, *it is, always first to beg the main Point in Question, and then triumph upon it as a Thing proved.* p. 88. This is the Manner of our Author, who repeats it on all Occasions that moral Truth and Fitness is the *only Evidence or Proof* of any Doctrine or Law, as coming from God; and without offering any Argument to prove it, but only supposing it, makes use of this all along as a Demonstration, that Miracles can be no Proof or Evidence of the divine Original of any Doctrine or Law. And if you will but grant him, that the other is the *only Proof*, then he will easily shew that this is not a Proof. But since it hath been shewn, that Miracles may be of such a Nature, as to yield a sufficient Proof of the divine Original and Authority of Doctrines and Laws attested and confirmed by those Miracles; then if human Tradition and Testimony may give us a reasonable and sufficient Assurance, that those Miracles were really wrought, it is evident that it is here brought in to very good Purpose. And that human Tradition may be so circumstanced, as to give sufficient Assurance that these Miracles were really wrought, is as true as that human Tradition can give us a sufficient Assurance of any past Facts: Nor can this be reasonably denied, except upon this Principle, that no past Facts can be transmitted to us with sufficient Evidence for a reasonable Man to depend upon. A Thing which the Enemies of Revelation have not yet ventured to assert.

All the Use he is pleased to allow to Tradition or human Testimony in Matters of Religion, is this, "That we may be probably assured from Tradition, and human Testimony, what our Fore-fathers believed about God and Religion, and what Reasons they assigned for it; but

"whether

“ whether they ought to have believed as they
“ did, or whether their Reasons will hold good
“ or not, is another Question, concerning which
“ Tradition, or human Testimony, can never in-
“ form us.” *p.* 85. Let us therefore proceed
upon his own State of the Case. I am not to be-
lieve any Religion to be true and divine, meerly
because my Ancestors believed it: But if I know
what the Grounds were upon which they believed
it, and am satisfied that the Grounds were just,
then I am obliged to believe it upon those Grounds
as well as they were. And supposing the Grounds
upon which it was first received and submitted to
as of divine Authority, were, besides the good
Tendency of its Doctrines and Laws, the illustri-
ous miraculous Attestations whereby it was con-
firmed, Tradition may give me a sufficient Assu-
rance to satisfy any reasonable Mind, of the Truth
of those extraordinary miraculous Facts, or that
those Facts were really done. And this is all that
Tradition or human Testimony is properly brought
for. For whether those Facts were a sufficient
Proof of the divine Authority of the Revelation
attested and confirmed by them, must be judged
not by *Tradition*, but by our own *Reason*, upon
considering the Nature and Circumstances of those
Facts and Attestations. And if our own Reason
convinceth us, that those Facts, supposing them
true, were proper and sufficient Attestations to the
divine Original of that Revelation, and if also we
have all the Proof that can be reasonably desired
that the Facts are true, then we are obliged to re-
ceive that Revelation as coming from God, and as
of divine Authority. And indeed the Proof of
those Facts is so strong, they are transmitted to us
with such convincing Evidence, that I am per-
suaded few resist the Argument taken from the
Facts in Favour of Christianity, but who would
have been among the Unbelieving, had they lived
in

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in the very Age in which those Facts were done. For the true Reason of their not believing, is not that there is not sufficient Proof of those Facts to convince and satisfy a reasonable Mind, and such as is esteemed sufficient in any other Case; but it is owing to certain Prejudices, and Dispositions of Mind, which probably would have hindered their submitting to the Evidence brought for the Christian Revelation, had they themselves been Eye-Witnesses to the Facts. And we may well reckon our Author one of this Make and Disposition of Mind, since he takes Care to let us know that he looks upon Miracles to be *no* Proofs at all, and therefore would not have been moved by them, tho' he had seen them done before his Eyes.

This Writer is pleased positively to insist upon it, "That there can be no such Thing as divine Faith, upon human Testimony; and that this absurd Supposition has been the Ground of all the Superstition and false Religion in the World. And that the Knowledge of any Truth can go no farther upon divine Authority, or as a Matter of divine Faith, than to the Person or Persons immediately inspired, or to whom the original Revelation was made." p. 82, 84.

But if, by *divine Faith upon human Testimony*, be only meant, that an original divine Revelation may be transmitted or conveyed to us by human Testimony, together with the extraordinary miraculous Facts whereby it was attested and confirmed, and that in such a Manner as to make it reasonable for us to believe, that it is indeed a divine Revelation, this hath been already shewn. And if I have sufficient Grounds of reasonable Assurance, concerning any Doctrines and Laws, that they came originally by divine Revelation, I am as truly obliged to regard them as coming from God, and to believe and obey them on that Account, as if I had them myself, by immediate Inspiration.

For the Obligation to believe and obey them, doth not depend upon the particular Way of my receiving them, but upon my having sufficient Ground to convince me that they came from God. This Writer indeed seems resolved, that whatever Arguments can be brought to prove that any Thing is a divine Revelation, the receiving it as such, shall not be called *divine Faith*, except the Person that believeth it, hath received it immediately from God himself. But whether he will allow it to be called *divine Faith* or not, the calling it by another Name, doth not at all alter the Nature of the Thing, or dissolve the Obligation. If I have sufficient Reason to be convinced that Miracles of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, supposing them to have been really done, are strong Attestations to the Truth, and divine Original of the Doctrines and Laws which they are wrought to confirm; and if I have sufficient Assurance, that these Facts were really done; then I am obliged to believe and receive those Doctrines, and obey those Laws, as of divine Authority. To do otherwise, would be to refuse to believe Doctrines which I have just Ground to conclude were revealed from God himself, and to refuse to obey Laws which I have just Ground to believe God himself hath enjoined; which would be a very criminal Conduct, highly displeasing to God, and contrary to the Duty that reasonable Creatures owe to the Supreme Being.

Thus I have considered what this Author offers with Regard to the Proofs or Evidences of divine Revelation in general; in which, his Design is plainly to shew, that there can be no proper Proofs or Evidences of divine Revelation to any, but the Persons immediately receiving it, and yet at the same Time he affects to own the great Usefulness of Revelation, in the present corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind.

CHAP. II.

An Entrance on the Author's Objections against the Old Testament. The strange Representation he makes of the Law of Moses. Some general Considerations concerning the Nature and Design of that Law. Its moral Precepts pure and excellent. Its ritual Injunctions appointed for wise Reasons. The Nature of its Sanctions considered. Reasons of God's erecting the People of Israel into a peculiar Polity. Nothing absurd in this Constitution. It was designed in a Subserviency to the general Good. The miraculous Facts whereby that Law was confirmed not poetical Embellishments, but real Facts. The Author's Reasons to prove that those Facts could not be understood in a literal Historical Sense shewn to be vain and insufficient.

HAVING consider'd what this Author hath advanced concerning divine Revelation in general, and the Proofs whereby it is established; I now proceed to the particular Attempts he makes to destroy the Authority of the Revelation contained in the sacred Writings of the Old and New Testament. He seems willing indeed to observe some Measures with regard to Christianity, but as to the Old Testament he throws off all Disguise; he every where openly rejects, and makes the most disadvantageous Representation possible both of the Law of *Moses* and the prophetic Writings; and expressly declares he will have nothing to do with them in Religion, p. 394. If his Representation be true, they are not only no true divine Revelation but a grand Imposture, contrary to Reason and common Sense, and to the Liberties of Mankind.

To begin with the Account he gives of the Law of *Moses*, he expressly declares that in its original proper

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proper and literal Sense, which he says was the only Sense intended by the Law-giver, *It had neither any thing of Truth or Goodness in it, but was a blinding enslaving Constitution, and an intolerable Yoke of Darknes and Bondage, Tyranny and Vassalage, Wrath and Misery*, p. 29. That it was a Law that introduced and confirmed a State of civil and religious Blindness and Bigotry, &c. p. 32. That it was a national Slavery, which the Jews had been unjustly subjected to, and which they had a right to throw off whenever they had a proper Opportunity, and to assert and reassume their natural and religious Rights and Liberties, p. 51. He calls it a wretched Scheme of Superstition, Blindness, and Slavery, contrary to all Reason and common Sense, set up under the specious popular Pretence of a divine Institution and Revelation from God, p. 71. These and others of the like Nature are the handsome Epithets he every where bestows upon the Law of Moses. He is not content with declaring it to be a meer piece of human Policy, but makes it the worst Constitution in the World. Nor did any of the Heathens, the greatest Enemies of the Jews, ever speak in such opprobrious Terms of Moses and his Constitutions as this pretended Christian Writer has done. If the Law of Moses merits these Epithets, it certainly deserves the Abhorrence of all Mankind, and Moses instead of being extraordinarily sent and inspir'd by God, was the most pernicious Impostor that ever was, and the greatest Enemy to his Nation, who instead of regarding him as they always did with the utmost Veneration, should rather have execrated his Memory.

Before I enter on a particular Discussion of the Objection he advances against the Law of Moses, I shall offer some general Considerations concerning the Nature and Design of that Law, whereby the true original intent, and the excellency and property of that Law may more evidently appear.

At

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At the time when the Law was given, *Idolatry* had made a very great Progress, the primitive Religion which was both derived by Tradition from the early Patriarchs, the progenitors of the human Race, and was also very agreeable to right Reason, was very much corrupted, especially in the main Principle of it, the worship and acknowledgment of one only the living and true God: And tho' there were considerable Remains of the ancient true Religion still preserved in some particular Families, yet Things were growing worse and worse; and it is highly probable, that if God had not extraordinarily interposed, true Religion and the just Knowledge and Worship of the Deity, would have been lost among Men. It pleas'd him therefore in this state of Things, to select a Nation to himself among whom the Knowledge and Worship of the true God should be preserved in a World *overrun* with Idolatry. And to that End he first exerted his own almighty Power and Goodness in *delivering* that Nation from a State of extreme Distress; Slavery and Oppression, and that in so extraordinary a Manner, as exhibited a marvellous Display of his own Majesty and Glory, and an entire triumph over Idols in the very Seat of Idolatry; for so *Egypt* then was; and then caused the most pure and excellent *Laws* to be given them, which were promulgated with the greatest Solemnity, and attested by the most amazing and unparallel'd Miracles. And in order the more effectually to answer the main Design he had in view, it pleas'd him to enter into a peculiar *Relation* to that People, and to take them for his own by a solemn publick Act or Covenant; whereby the People on the one hand brought themselves under the most express and solemn Engagements, to obey the Laws he gave them, and to be absolutely devoted to his Service; and he on his part engaged to be their God and King in a special Relation, to give them the Land

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of Canaan for their Inheritance, and to pour forth many signal Benefits upon them, and make them a happy People. I see nothing in this unworthy of God, or that can be shewn to be inconsistent with his divine Perfection. Nor can this Writer himself consistently find fault with it, since speaking of the Covenant God made with *Abraham*, in which he promised to be a God to him, and to his Seed, and to settle them in the Possession of the Land of Canaan, and make them happy upon the Condition of their continuing in the Religion and Worship of the one true God, &c. he saith this was a wise and reasonable Transaction between God and Abraham; and had the Conditions been performed by Abraham's Family and Posterity, no doubt but the Grant on God's part had been made good, p. 258, 259.

If we enquire into the Nature of the Laws that were given them, the main Design of them seems evidently to be this; to preserve them from Idolatry, and Vice, and Wickedness, and to engage them to the Worship of the only true God, and to the Practice of Righteousness. The great fundamental Principle that lies at the Foundation of the whole Body of Laws delivered by *Moses*, and to which there is a constant Reference in that whole Constitution, and whereby it is eminently distinguished from all other the most celebrated ancient Laws and Constitutions is this; that there is but one only the living and true God, who is alone to be worshipped and adored, loved, and obeyed. He is there represented as the eternal and self-existent Jehovah, Almighty and Allsufficient, to whom there is none like, or that can be compared, and who is not to be represented by any corporeal Form; that he is the great Creator of the Universe, who made Heaven and Earth, and all Things that are therein by the Word of his Power, and who preserveth and governeth all Things by his Providence,

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dence, directing and ordering all Events ; that he is most just and holy, most faithful and true, a hater of Iniquity, who will severely punish obstinate presumptuous Transgressors, and yet is full of Compassion and Gracious, Longsuffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, and ready to forgive penitent returning Sinners. In that Law they are every where most strictly commanded to worship and serve the Lord God, and him only, to love him with all their Hearts and Souls, to fear him, and dread his Displeasure above all Things, to put their whole Trust and Confidence in him, to submit themselves chearfully to his rightful Authority, and to obey all his Commands.

And as the Law of *Moses* directs and instructs Men in the Duties they more immediately owe to God, so also in those they owe to one another. It forbids in the strongest Manner all Malice, and Wrath, and Bitterness ; all Injustice and Fraud, Violence and Oppression ; all Fornication and Adultery, and Uncleaness ; all Falshood and Guile, and Deceit ; and even all covetous and inordinate Affections and Desires : It not only requires exact Truth and Fidelity, a strict inviolable Honesty in our Dealings towards all Men, but it expressly requires us to love our Neighbours as our selves, to be ready to assist and do good to one another upon all Occasions, yea even to our Enemies themselves, to shew Mercy to the Poor, the Indigent, and destitute Strangers and Servants *. Upon the whole, the moral Precepts of the Law of *Moses* are pure and excellent ; they are such as if duly practised and obeyed could not fail to make that Nation happy, if the pure Worship of God, and the Practice of Righteousness, Justice, Fidelity, Tempe-

* See *Exod.* xx. 12—18. xxii. 21, 24. xxiii. 1—8. *Lev.* vi. 2, 5. xix. 18, 36. xxv. 14—17. xiv. 29. xxii. 1—4. 22—29. xxiii. 17. xxiv. 20—22. xxv. 13, 16.

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rance, and of mutual Charity and Benevolence could make them so. *Moses* therefore might justly represent these Laws and Statutes as sufficient, if carefully obeyed and attended to, to make them a *wise and understanding People*, above other Nations, *Deut. iv. 5, 6.* and again *ver. 8. What Nation is there so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I set before you this Day?*

As to the ritual Precepts there enjoined, which are many and various; tho' it cannot be expected that we should be able to assign the particular Reasons of them at this Distance, yet we have just Reason to conclude that they were all given for wise and good Purposes, which render'd them very fit and proper for that time, and for that People*.

Many

* I doubt not but if we had distinct Views of the Reasons of the several ritual Injunctions prescrib'd in the Law of *Moses*, the Wisdom and Goodness of God in appointing them would eminently appear. Many happy Attempts have been made this way by learned Persons, both *Jews* and *Christians*, that have given great Light to many of the Mosaick Rites and Constitutions. It is evident there is nothing in any of them that intrencheth on the sacred Rules of *Virtue*, *Purity*, and *Decency*, as did many of the Rites in Use among the Heathen Nations, *e.g.* The cruel Rites of *Moloch*, and the impure ones of *Baal-Peor*. And it may not be improper to observe, that some of the Mosaick Constitutions which seem at first view most strange and extraordinary, if closely considered, do furnish a Proof of the divine Original of that Constitution and Polity. Of this kind I take the Law relating to the *Sabbatical Year* to be. Every seventh Year was to be a *Sabbath of Rest unto the Land, a Sabbath for the Lord*, in which they were neither to sow their Fields, nor prune their Vineyards: And it is expressly promised that God would command his *Blessing upon them in the sixth Year*, and it should bring forth *Fruit for three Years*, that is, for the sixth and the two succeeding Years, the seventh and eighth, *Lev. xxv. 2, 4, 10, 22.* No Constitution like this can be found in the Laws of any other Nation. And it may be strongly argued, that *Moses* would not have proposed such a Law, if he had been left merely to himself in his Legislation, and had not received it from God, who was alone able to make good that Promise upon which the Observation of it depended; and by so doing gave a standing

E

remarkable

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Many of them were design'd for the more effectual obtaining that which was the proper and principal End of that Law, which was to preserve the *Jews* from *Idolatry*. For this End, many of the Rites prescribed them were in direct Opposition to those of the neighbouring idolatrous Nations; and great care was taken by many peculiar Usages to keep them a distinct and separate People. There were many Rites also that added a great outward Pomp and Solemnity to their Worship, that they might be the less in Danger of being drawn aside by the Splendor and Decorations of the Heathenish Idolatry. Other Rites were instituted in commemoration of great and signal Events, extraordinary Acts of Providence towards their Nation, the keeping up of a constant Remembrance of which could not but be of great Use for preserving the Love and Worship of God amongst them, awakning their Gratitude, and engaging their dutiful Obedience. And lastly, many of the Rites then prescribed had a farther View to the *Messiah*, his Offices and Benefits, of which they were design'd as Types and Prefigurations. I know this Writer will not allow

remarkable Evidence of his constant special Presence and Providence amongst them, and both confirmed the Authority of that Law, and answered the main Design of it, which was to keep them close to the Acknowledgment, Obedience, and Adoration of him the only true God, in preference to all *Idols*; since nothing of this Kind could be produced in favour of any of the Idol Deities. And accordingly in the Sabbatical Year the whole Nation, not the Men only, but the Women and Children were obliged to appear at the Place which the Lord should choose, and were to hear the whole Law read to them, *Deut. xxxi. 10—13.* which was then most likely to be attended to, and to make an Impression, as they had then in the abundant Plenty of that Year, and the extraordinary Provision made for them; a sensible Proof of God's sovereign Dominion and Providence, and of the divine Original and Authority of that Law before their Eyes. Other Reflections of this Kind might be made on several of the Mosaic Constitutions. But the particular Consideration of them would take up more time than is consistent with my present Design.

this,

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this, but he must not take it ill if we prefer the Authority of the Apostle *Paul* to his; what he offers against it shall be consider'd afterwards. But tho' many and various Rites are enjoin'd and prescrib'd in the *Mosaical* Law, yet still it is evident that the main Stress is there laid on Things of a moral Nature, the great essential Duties of Religion. The absolute Necessity of real universal Righteousness, Piety, and Charity, Justice, Temperance, the Fear and Love of God is there frequently and strongly inculcated, and most pathetically enforced. Scarce any thing can be more moving and affecting than the Exhortations to Piety and Virtue given by *Moses* to the People of *Israel*, especially in the last part of his Life in the Book of *Deuteronomy*. Any one that seriously and impartially considers them will find such a wonderful Force and Pathos, as well as a divine Solemnity in them, as cannot but give a very advantageous Idea of that excellent Person, and of the Laws he gave them in the Name of God. All along in that Law, the Favour of God is *promised* to those that go on in the Practice of Righteousness; that God will love them, and delight in them, and will most certainly reward them, and make them happy. And on the other hand, the most awful *Threatnings* are there denounced against presumptuous Transgressors. God's Purity and Holiness, his Detestation against Sin, and the Terrors of his Wrath and Vengeance, are there described in the most strong, and ardent, and significant Expressions, which have a manifest tendency where they are really believed, and seriously considered to fill Men with a deep Sense of the Evil and Malignity of Sin, and to deter them from committing it.

It is true, that the *Immortality* of the Soul and a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, is rather supposed and implied in the Law of *Moses*, than directly asserted and revealed; and one Reason

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son of this might be, that these Things were not controverted or denied in those early Ages. A considerable part even of the Idolatry that then prevailed, proceeded upon the Notion of separate incorporeal Beings: and especially the Worship of departed Heroes, necessarily suppos'd that their Souls survived after Death. *Cicero* speaks of the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, as a Tradition derived from the most ancient times. And it might easily be shewn, that it spread universally through all Nations, and still continued to be believed among them, even when they had lost the true Knowledge and Worship of God. This appears from the best Accounts we have of the Sentiments of the ancient *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, *Phenicians*, *Scythians*, &c. but afterwards thro' the false Refinements of Philosophy, and vain Deceit in the latter Ages, under the Pretence of Wisdom above the Vulgar, many began to dispute against, and to deny the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State. And therefore it became then absolutely necessary to make the most clear and express Revelation of it, and to set it in the strongest Light, as it is done by the Gospel of *Jesus*: but as far as appears, it was universally acknowledged when the Law of *Moses* was given; and I shall afterwards shew that it is plainly implied in that Law, and was all along believed by the Body of the *Jewish* Nation in all Ages.

But it must be considered, that as the Law of *Moses* was immediately directed to the whole People of *Israel* consider'd as a Nation or Community, so the Sanctions of that Law, or the Promises and Threatnings whereby Obedience to it was enforced, were suited to the Nature and Circumstances of a Community, and therefore were directly and immediately of a temporal Nature, relating to the Happiness or Misery, the good or evil Consequences, their Obedience or Disobedience would bring

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bring upon them in this present World. And there was a manifest Propriety in it, that these Things should be much insisted on in that Law; because some of its Injunctions and Observances, tho' instituted for wise Reasons, seemed laborious and burdensome, as well as contrary to those of other Nations; God was pleased therefore to assure them that this should not turn to their Disadvantage even in this present State; that he would abundantly compensate their Obedience by various Blessings, which he would pour forth upon them in this World; and that by a faithful Adherence to his Service they would promote their present Interest, and by a Neglect and Disobedience to his Laws would draw upon themselves the greatest Evils and Calamities. Such Promises and Blessings were most likely to make strong and vigorous Impressions on the Minds of the People, and were wisely and condescendingly adapted to their Tempers and Circumstances, to allure and engage them to Obedience, and to deter them from Idolatry and Wickedness. But still these did not exclude the Rewards and Punishments of a Future State, which were all along supposed and implied, and the Knowledge and Belief of which was derived to them from the antient Patriarchs, and had obtained among them, and other Nations from the Beginning.

Upon this brief View of the Law of *Moses*, it appears that the main Design of it was most excellent, viz. to preserve those to whom it was given from the general *Idolatry* and *Wickedness* that had overspread the World, and to maintain the *Knowledge* and *Worship* of the only true God, and the *Practice* of true Religion and Righteousness among them. And all the subsequent Administrations of God toward them were wisely fitted to promote the same valuable Design. It was for this that he interposed from time to time in an extraordinary Manner, by signal Acts of Providence,

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in a way of Judgment or Mercy, sufficient to awaken the most stupid, to acknowledge and adore his Hand, and to convince them that their Blessings and Punishments came from him. The idolatrous Nations had with the true Worship of God almost lost the right Notions of his Providence. They attributed their Blessings and Calamities wholly to inferior Deities, in whose Hands they supposed the Administration and Government of human Affairs to be vested : to whom therefore they addressed themselves, and paid all their Worship and Homage, whilst they almost entirely neglected the supreme Being, as not concerning himself with the Affairs of Men. But God's Treatment of the *Jews*, and his way of Administration towards them was a constant Proof of his Providence, and was peculiarly fitted to prevent their being led away by those pernicious Notions, and to lead them to regard and consider the Hand of God in all things that befel them.

If it be urged as an absurd thing in that Constitution, that God is there represented as entering into a peculiar *Relation* to one particular People, who were to be kept distinct and separate from all others ; let it be considered that the particular Relation that for wise Ends he entered into towards this People, was no way inconsistent with his universal Dominion and Government, but supposed it. He was still as much as ever the Ruler of the World, and the God and Parent of all Mankind. Nor did the particular and special Benefits conferred upon this People, at all lessen his universal Goodness. And surely no Man who believeth that God presides over all Events, and concerns himself in human Affairs, and at the same time doth observe the mighty Difference that hath been, and is made between some Persons, and some Nations, and others, with respect to all Advantages for Improvement in Knowledge and Virtue, will pretend to

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say, that it is inconsistent with the Wisdom or Goodness of divine Providence, to distinguish one Nation with peculiar Privileges and Advantages above others, since it is still true, that he doth and hath all along done much good to all in the Methods of his kind Providence, and giveth them many Advantages, if they were careful to make a right Improvement of them.

But besides it must be considered, that God's thus selecting a peculiar People or Nation in so extraordinary a Manner, and giving them such Laws was not merely designed for the sake of that particular People, but was designed in a subserviency to the *general Good*, and had a tendency to promote it, by keeping up the Knowledge of true Religion in the World, which otherwise was in Danger of being extinguished. By virtue of this peculiar Constitution, there was still a Remnant preserved, professing and maintaining the Knowledge and Worship of the only true God, free from Idolatry. There was still true Religion maintained like a Light shining in a dark Place, and how far this Light was diffused, and how many kindled their Lamps at it, we cannot tell. The *Israelites* were placed in a convenient Situation between *Egypt*, and *Assyria*, and *Chaldea*, the most remarkable Countries then on Earth. And the carrying them out of *Egypt* in such a wonderful Manner, and settling them in *Canaan*, with such a Series of mighty Acts, and an outstretched Arm, and afterwards, the marvellous Interpositions of divine Providence towards them in a way of Judgment or Mercy, would probably reach a great way, and spread the Fear of God unto distant Nations. And in many Passages of Scripture it is signified that this was one Design for which they were intended. The Fame of the mighty Acts done for *Israel*, and the Laws given them, is represented as reaching to the Heathens, and spreading the Glory

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and Majesty of God; and the Nations are called upon to regard and to consider them *. It is very probable, particularly, that in the Days of *David*, when the Kingdom of *Israel* made a great Figure, and was of considerable Extent, and in the Reign of *Solomon*, who was so admired and sought unto from all Parts for his Wisdom, and under whom the most glorious Structure was built to the only true God that ever the World saw; the *Israelites*, and their Laws, and Constitutions, became more generally known, and this might have a very good Effect in bringing many to the Knowledge, and Worship, and Obedience of the true God. It is evident from the Language of *Hiram* King of *Tyre*, and of the Queen of *Sheba*, that they had a high Esteem and Veneration for the Lord *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, 2 *Chron.* xi. 11, 12. 1 *Kings* x. 9. and the like may be supposed concerning many others.

After this, even their *Captivities* and *Dispersions* were made subservient by divine Providence towards spreading the Knowledge of Religion in the Countries where they were scattered, and where many of them became very eminent, and with a remarkable Steadiness adhered to their Law, and to the Religion and Worship of the true God there prescribed. The Decrees of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Darius*, and *Cyrus*, shew the Esteem they had for the only living and true God, the God of *Israel*, *Dan.* xi. 47. iii. 29. iv. 33—37. vi. 25—27. *Ezra* i. 2, 4. And it has been very probably supposed by many learned Men, that it was owing very much to the Light derived from the *Jews*, and the admirable Writings and Laws preserved among them, that there was more of the Knowledge of

* See *Exod.* vii. 5. ix. 6. *Lev.* xxvi. 45. *Numb.* xiv. 13, 15. *Deut.* iv. 6. 1 *Kings* viii. 41—43. lvii. 9. lxvi. 1—5. *Psal.* xcvi. 1—4. *Jer.* xxxiii. 9.

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God, and of some of the main Principles of Religion preserved in the East than in other Parts of the World. The nearer we come to the Times of the Gospel, the plainer Proofs we have of the Knowledge and Worship of the true God and Religion, being spread and propagated by the *Jews*. As they were diffused almost all over the *Roman* Empire, as well as in *Persia*, and the Eastern Countries, so they every where profelyted great Numbers to the Worship of the only true God in opposition to the fashionable Idolatry which then universally prevailed. It does not appear that any of the most refined *Philosophers*, those Men of admired Knowledge and Genius, ever converted so much as a single Person or Village from their Idolatrous Superstitions; on the contrary, they all meanly submitted and conformed to the Idolatry established in their respected Countries, and exhorted others to do so too. Whereas the *Jews* were instrumental to turn many from Idolatry, and to spread the Knowledge of the true God far and wide in many Parts of the *Roman* Empire, *Babylonia*, *Persia*, &c. and this tended to prepare the World for receiving that last and most perfect Dispensation which our Lord Jesus Christ was to introduce.

This naturally leads our Thoughts to another valuable End, which shews the Propriety of erecting the *Jews* into a particular Polity, and separating them from the rest of Mankind by peculiar Laws; and that is, the subserviency this had to the great Design, the Wisdom of God had all along in view, viz. the sending his Son in the Fulness of time, to save and to redeem Mankind, and to bring the clearest and most perfect Revelation of his Will. There had been some general Promises and Expectations of the Redeemer to come made and communicated to Mankind from the Beginning of the World. But this, like other Traditions derived from the earliest Ages, was in process of Time

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Time corrupted and lost; so that if this Promise and Hope had been left meerly at large among the Nations in general, there would have been scarce any Traces of it remaining. This the Divine Wisdom foresaw, and therefore it pleased God for this, as well as other Purposes, to select a peculiar People, to be as it were the Depositories of that Hope and Promise, who accordingly were kept distinct, as a Kind of special Inclosure from the Rest of Mankind. He appointed that the Saviour who was to come, and who had been foretold from the Beginning, should spring and arise out of that Nation, and from a particular Tribe and Family amongst them. He ordered it so, that many of their Laws and Rights had a Reference to this great Event. A Succession of Prophets was raised among them, who described that glorious Person that was to come, by his most remarkable Characters; foretold the Benefits of his Kingdom, and plainly pointed out the Time and Place of his Birth, and principal Circumstances of his Appearance. And accordingly among that People there was constantly kept up a Belief and Expectation of his Coming, and from them it spread generally through the Nations. All this prepared the World for receiving him, and together with the illustrious Attestations given to him at his actual Appearance, by the Miracles he performed, by his Resurrection from the Dead, and the consequent Effusion of the Holy Ghost, yielded all the Evidence that was proper, in a Case of such vast Importance. Thus that peculiar Constitution tended to keep the Proofs of his Mission more distinct, and give them a greater Force. Accordingly the first Harvest of Converts to Christianity was among the *Jews*, and the Jewish Proselytes, who were prepared for it by the Knowledge of the only true God, and the Belief of the Mosaick and Prophetical Writings. And even the unbelieving

Jews

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Jews, who rejected the Messiah — when he actually came, were, and still are, without intending it, remarkable Witnesses for Christianity. The Proofs drawn from those Books, the divine Inspiration of which they themselves acknowledge, come with greater Force and Evidence, when transmitted and attested by Enemies, than if they had been conveyed to us by them as Friends. And when after their long Infidelity, the Body of them shall be converted to the Christian Faith, which I think is plain from what the Apostle *Paul* saith in the eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, this shall give a farther Evidence in favour of Christianity. And all this we may justly suppose to have entered into the Scheme of God's most wise Providence, who saw all Things from the Beginning, in setting apart the *Jews* to be a peculiar People to himself, and giving them such a Constitution whereby they were to be kept separate and distinct from the Rest of Mankind.

These several Observations may serve to give us an Idea of the Nature and Design of the Mosaic Constitution, which appears to have been excellently fitted and designed to preserve the Knowledge and Worship of the only true God, in opposition to all Idolatry, to guide those to whom it was given to true Religion, and the Practice of Righteousness; and to preserve the Faith and Hope of the Redeemer, to prepare the World for his Coming, and give fuller Attestations to him when he actually came; and, consequently, it appears that this Constitution answered many wise Purposes of divine Providence, and was made subservient to the general Good of Mankind.

And now I shall proceed to consider the Objections this Writer brings against the Mosaic Law and Constitution. He pretends to invalidate the Truth of the miraculous Attestations whereby that Law was attested; he argues against that Law and Constitution,

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Constitution, from the Authority of *St. Paul*, and from the pretended Inconsistency between it and the New Testament; and endeavours in several Instances to shew, that it was in itself an unrighteous Constitution, tyrannical and absurd, and unworthy of God.

Let us first consider what our Author offers against the Truth of the extraordinary miraculous *Facts*, whereby this Law was attested. And the Way he goes about to invalidate them, is not by denying that this History was written by *Moses*, or proving that the History is false; but he undertakes to shew, that the Relations there given us of those Facts were not designed to be understood as historical Accounts of Facts that really happened, but purely were poetical Embellishments, like the Fictions of *Homer*, and never intended by *Moses* himself to be taken in a literal Sense. He first pretends to give an Account of the Original of Miracles, which he derives from the Juggles and Impostures of the *Egyptian* Priests, “ Who having
“ set themselves diligently to the Study of occult
“ Philosophy, or natural Magick, in which they
“ made great Improvements, and which they
“ kept as deep Secrets to themselves, made the
“ People believe that they had an immediate In-
“ tercourse and Communication with the Gods.
“ From that Time *Egypt* became a Land of Mi-
“ racles and Prodigies, continually wrought by
“ these holy Magicians; which had such an Ef-
“ fect upon the *Israelites*, in the Course of 210
“ Years, whilst they remained in *Egypt*, that no-
“ thing could influence them but Miracles; and
“ they would never have regarded *Moses*, if he
“ could not have outdone the *Egyptian* Sorcer-
“ ers.” p. 241, 242. And again he tells us, that
“ As they had seen nothing for 200 Years toge-
“ ther but Miracles and Prodigies, wrought by
“ these priestly Magicians, they could conceive of

“ no

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“ no other Way of receiving Information and Instruction from God.” p. 247, 248. And then he goes on to observe,

That “ *Moses* and the Prophets being under a Necessity, from the Blindness and Obduracy of the People, always writ with a double Intention, or ambiguous Construction. They had a popular political Sense, which as the most literal and obvious, was most suited to the gross Apprehensions, Prejudices, and Superstitions of the Vulgar; and at the same Time another Meaning, or Construction, which was the true and rational one; but to be supposed and understood only by the wiser Sort, the Case was this, that the most ancient Narrative Authors, whether sacred or profane, did not write as mere Historians, but as Orators, Poets, and Dramatists, in which Way of Writing they kept up to strict historical Truth, as to the fundamental leading Facts, or principal Events, but with Regard to the Manner and Circumstances of Action, the Orator and Poet often took the Liberty to embellish and recommend the History with such sensible Images and dramattick Representations, as being most agreeable to the popular Taste, and vulgar Notions, might the more effectually move and direct the Affections and Passions of the People, as the great Engines and Springs of Government.” Thus he observes, that “ *Homer's* Account of the *Trojan War*, and of the Conquest of the Country by the *Greeks*, is historically true, as to the principal Facts and Persons concerned on both Sides, but his Manner and Circumstances of Action, his miraculous Imagery, and poetick Ornaments, are all his own, like our *Milton* and *Shakespeare*.” And he observes, that “ The History of the *Exodus* and Conquest of *Canaan* relates to Things done 600 Years before *Homer's* Time, and is written

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“ much in the same oratorical and dramattick Way;
 “ that these poetick Beauties, and dramattick Re-
 “ presentations of Things, can occasion no Diffi-
 “ culty to those who enter into the Spirit and De-
 “ sign of the Author, and who can distinguish
 “ the Orator or Poet from the Historian: But vul-
 “ gar Heads must make strange Work with such
 “ Performances, who, without entering into the
 “ Spring and Design, should understand every
 “ Thing according to the Letter; and this was
 “ the Case of the *Jewish* Nation, with Regard to
 “ the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, and
 “ *St. Paul* has evidently and irrefutably proved it.”
 p. 249, 250, 251.

Let us suppose all that this Writer affirms to be
 true concerning the *Egyptian* Priests, and their pre-
 tended Miracles and Prodigies. I think it clearly
 follows from this Representation of Things, that
 if they pretended to work Miracles in Support of
 Idolatry, and made Use of these to propagate the
 Worship of Demons, this made it highly be-
 coming the Wisdom and Goodness of God, when
 he had it in View to establish a Constitution, or
 peculiar Polity, and give a System of Laws, par-
 ticularly designed in Opposition to the spreading
 Idolatry, to establish it by such extraordinary and
 amazing Acts of Power, as should fully exert his
 Divinity and Glory, and supreme Dominion:—
 Works of such a Nature, that none of the pre-
 tended Wonders wrought by the *Egyptian* Priests
 or Magicians could be set in Competition with
 them. This shews the Propriety of all those mira-
 culous Works done in *Egypt*, those *Signs and*
Wonders, as they are often called, done in the
Land of Ham. The doing these Things in *Egypt*,
 the Seat of Idolatry, from whence it was propa-
 gated to other Nations, was such a Triumph over
 all their Idols, and those great Patrons and Propa-
 gators of Idolatry, as ought to have had a mighty

“ Influence

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Influence upon them. The Plagues and Judgments inflicted upon them, should have awakened them, and all that heard of these Things, to serious Reflections. And God's interposing in these Circumstances by a Series of such wonderful Works, so far superior to all that were wrought, or pretended to be wrought, in Favour of Idolatry, was of great Service for the establishing true Religion in the World.

If the Miracles wrought by *Moses* had not been of a very extraordinary and unparallelled Nature, this Writer, and others of his way, would have been ready to say there was nothing in them supernatural, nothing but what might have been performed by the Art of cunning Men, or by Skill in occult *Philosophy*, and natural *Magick*. And yet now that they are so amazing and stupendous, so beyond all parallel, their very Greatness and extraordinary Nature is made an Objection against them, and a Reason for not believing them.

This Writer has let us plainly enough know that he does not believe the Miracles to have been really wrought, that are recorded in the Books of *Moses*, to have been wrought in *Egypt*, and in the *Wilderness*, and he has in his great Sagacity found out a very extraordinary Expedient for saving the Credit of *Moses*, and yet denying the Truth of the Facts which he relates. He has discovered that *Moses's* History is a *Poem*, and that all these Accounts of Facts, are only poetical Embellishments or Fictions, and that he always writ with a double or ambiguous Construction, the one full of the Marvellous suited to the gross Apprehensions of the *Vulgar*; the other, the true and rational one to be understood only by the wiser Sort. But certainly, never was there any thing more remote from poetical Ornaments, or the Affectation of studied Oratory, than the *Mosaick* History. It was not that *Moses*, if he had designed to write a *Poem*, was not capable

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pable of doing it to great Advantage. The admirable Specimens he has given of this Kind in the *Song* he composed on occasion of the *Israelites* passing the *Red Sea*, and in that which he gave to them a little before his Decease, and in the Blessings he pronounced upon the Tribes, shew the Sublimity of his Figures, noble and lofty Expressions, beautiful and significant Metaphors; but in the Body of his History, where he gives an account of Laws and Facts, all these things are carefully avoided. Every thing is related in the most simple unadorned Manner, as becomes plain Truth, and a naked Narration of Facts. The *Orator* and *Poet* no where appears, but the plain grave *Historian* and *Law-giver*; the extraordinary miraculous Facts whereby the Law was attested, are proposed to the People as Things that really happened, yea as Things which they themselves had seen, and to which they were Witnesses. He appeals to the Body of the People concerning the Truth of these Facts, and founds the Authority of his Laws upon them. And will this Writer, or any Man that has any regard to Reason or Argument, say, there is any Parallel between this and the writing an heroick Poem like *Homer*? or can any Man of common Sense suppose that *Homer* intended to put all the Fictions he relates, upon the People for Things that literally and historically happened?

If *Moses* himself writ those Books that give an account of the Laws and Facts; and we have as full a Proof of this as we can have, that any Book was written by any Author under whose Name it goes; for we have the constant Testimony of the *whole Nation* to whom those Laws were given, and who regarded them with great Veneration, as the Rule of their Polity; and of all *other Nations* that had occasion to mention them, still ascribed these Laws and Writings to *Moses*; and which ought to have

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have a great weight with Christians, they are all along ascribed to him in the New Testament by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*; nor do I find that our Author himself denies, but rather supposes it: I say, if *Moses* himself writ those Accounts of the Laws and Facts, they were written and published at the very time in which these extraordinary and miraculous Facts were said to be done. And if so, the Facts related were of such a Nature, that it was impossible the People should not know whether they had really happened or not: and it was impossible to have imposed them upon the People as true, or made them to have believed them true, if they had not known them to be so. I will grant all that this Writer is pleased to suppose concerning the *Stupidity* and *Blindness* of the *Israelites*. Let us suppose them to have been the most ignorant, brutish, superstitious Generation of Men that ever lived upon the Earth; yet if it be allowed that they had their Senses at all, and that they could tell what was actually done before their Eyes, which I think is but a reasonable Supposition, then they could know whether these Things were done in *Egypt*, at the *Red Sea*, and in the *Wilderness*, which *Moses* told them were done in their own Sight. Could they possibly have been persuaded that they were brought out of *Egypt* by such a Series of mighty stupendous Acts done in their own View: that they had passed thro' the *Red Sea* as on dry Land, whilst the Army of *Egypt* following them, were overwhelmed with the Waters, and that they themselves had seen it: that when they were ready to perish for thirst in the *Wilderness*, *Moses* only struck the Rock in their Sight, and Waters gushed out in abundance like a River, of which they drank plentifully, and their Cattle: that they were present when the Law was promulgated with such amazing Solemnity amidst the most awful Thunders and Lightnings, and that

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the Words were distinctly pronounced in their own hearing: that they had been fed in the barren Wilderness for forty Years together by Bread that fell from Heaven six Days in the Week and intermitted the Seventh, and that they themselves had gathered it, and lived upon it all along: I say, could a whole Nation possibly have been made to believe that all these things had happened to themselves, and in their own sight, if it had not been so? this were the wildest, the most extravagant Supposition in the World; nor is a Man that is capable of making such a Supposition fit to be disputed with any longer; since it is scarce possible to drive any Man to a greater Absurdity. Nor is it less absurd to suppose that any Man in his Senses, much less so wise a Man as *Moses* certainly was, would have taken such a way as this of dealing with the People, and would have appealed to them concerning such Facts, of the Falseness of which the whole Nation could have convinced him, if they had not been true. This would have been to have taken the most effectual way in the World, to defeat his own Design, by putting the Credit of his own divine Mission, and the Authority of his Laws, upon Facts of so publick a Nature, which it was the easiest thing in the World to contradict, and which the meanest of the People, that had the use of their Senses, must on that Supposition have known to be false. And the frequent Murmurings against *Moses*, and the Opposition made to his Authority and to his Laws, many of which were contrary to the Peoples deeply imbibed Prejudices and Customs, shews that it would not have been easy to have managed them if they had not been fully convinced that all those Facts to which *Moses* appealed were true. His *Exhortations* to the People in the Book of *Deuteronomy* not long before his Death, when he made a solemn Repetition of the Laws and Facts; I say, the pathetic *Exhortations*

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tions he gives them to Obedience are founded on those Facts, and have a constant Reference to them; and they are delivered with the greatest Gravity and Solemnity, and at the same time with the greatest Plainness and Simplicity, and a most fatherly Tenderness and Compassion towards the People. They have all the Marks of Seriousness and Truth that any thing can possibly have. And as he commanded the People to acquaint themselves with the Laws he had given them in the Name of God, and to teach them diligently to their Children; so also to instruct them in the great Things which God had done for them, or the extraordinary miraculous Facts wrought in Attestation of those Laws. Besides all which he instituted sacred Rites which were to be observed by all the People with great Solemnity at stated times every Year, on purpose to keep up the Remembrance of these extraordinary Facts, and to transmit them to future Generations. And accordingly, the Memory of these wonderful Facts was still preserved, and the Truth of them acknowledged by the whole Nation, and that in the Times of their greatest Degeneracy, and under all the Revolutions of their Government. In all their publick Monuments, in all the Writings that were published in different Ages among them, there is a constant Reference not only to these Laws as given by Moses to their Nation, but to the wonderful Facts that were done in attestation of these Laws as of undoubted Credit.

As to what our Author talks of a double Sense in the Writings of Moses and the Prophets, the one designed for the *Vulgar*, the other for the *wiser* Sort: it is to be observed, that he is only for admitting this double Sense in the historical Narration of Facts related in the Writings of Moses; but he denies that any of the *Laws* of Moses or the *Prophecies* have any mystical or typical Sense at all,

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all, or any farther Reference than the meer Letter : as I shall have occasion to take Notice afterwards. Thus the Laws of *Moses* and the prophetic Writings must be taken in a literal or mystical Sense, just as he thinks will best answer the End he has in view, of exposing them. Prophecies delivered in figurative Expressions, and the whole turn of which leads to a farther View, they are to be carried no farther than the bare Letter ; but Matters of Fact told in a plain simple Manner must be figurative and mystical. He tells us indeed that this pretended figurative Sense of the Facts was *understood by the wiser sort*. But it is certain that in this Respect there was no Difference between the wise Men and the Vulgar among the *Jews*, all without Exception believed the Account of these extraordinary miraculous Facts recorded by *Moses*; even their wisest Men, whose admirable Writings far superior to those of the most celebrated Philosophers, shew them to have been Men of excellent Sense and Knowledge, and just Notions of Things.

But what is most extraordinary, our Author is for bringing in the Apostle *Paul* as a Voucher to prove that the Facts recorded in the Law of *Moses*, were no more than poetical Embellishments. He says that Apostle *has evidently and irrefutably proved* that the *Jews* were in the wrong in understanding the Writings of *Moses* according to the Letter, that is, in taking the Facts there recorded, (for of these the Author is there speaking) for things that *really* and literally happened, see p. 251. But nothing can be more evident to any one that is acquainted with the Writings of St. *Paul*, than that whenever he has occasion to refer to any of the extraordinary miraculous *Facts* done in Attestation of the Mosaical Dispensation, he always supposes them to be things of undoubted Truth and Credit, and which really and actually happened : but with respect

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respect to some of the *Rites* prescribed in the Law of *Moses*, he shews they had a farther view to the Gospel Times, as *Types* and *Shadows* of good Things to come, and were designed as preparatory to the Dispensation of the *Messiah*. Now this the Author ventures to contradict, and in Opposition to the Apostle boldly asserts, that the *Law* of *Moses* had no such typical View or mystical Sense at all; but with regard to the *historical* Facts which are plainly and clearly related, these things are only to be understood and taken in a mystical or allegorical Sense. And this he would pass upon us for St. *Paul's* Opinion, as if this was that *Spiritual* and Typical Sense of the Law which that Apostle pleads for. The most extensive Charity scarce leaves room to suppose that this Author is so blind as not to know that this is gross and wilful Misrepresentation.

But let us consider what he pretends to offer as a Proof that the miraculous Facts recorded in the Writings of *Moses*, and by which that Law was attested, are not to be understood in a literal Sense; that is, as he intends it, that they were not *Types* in Fact, nor Accounts of Things that really happened, but merely poetical Embellishments.

He says, p. 251. "Should we take this *Drama* in the obvious literal Sense [that is if we take the historical Accounts *Moses* gives to be really true] we must suppose him to have been a more fabulous romantick Writer, than *Homer*, *Æsop*, *Ovid*, or any of the Heathen Poets and Mythologists." This is very boldly and confidently said after the Author's manner, but let us see what Proof he brings of so strange an Assertion.

He saith, that "if the History of the *Exodus*, as he calls it, or Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and conquest of *Canaan* be taken in the literal obvious Sense, we must suppose that God in those Days appeared, spoke, and acted like a Man,

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“ or a finite circumscribed Being, in a visible sensible Manner ; that he conversed intimately and familiarly with *Moses*, as a Man talketh with his Friend ; that he went out of *Egypt* at the Head of the *Israelites* Army, and walked with them through the *Red Sea* ; that he travelled up and down with them forty Years in the Wilderness, always at the Beck or Call of *Moses*, to consult and talk with him upon every Occasion ; that God in a visible sensible Manner, as personally present, always gave *Moses* the Word of Command when they should march, and when they should not, and marked out every Foot of Ground from time to time for the Encampments of their respective Tribes. In short, God himself as visibly and personally present, acted as a General, and *Moses* had nothing to do but to follow Orders, and obey the Word of Command, and which a Fool might have done as well as a wise Man,” p. 252.

And is this all the Proof he brings, that the historical Facts recorded in the Writings of *Moses*, are no more to be credited than *Æsop's Fables*, or *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, because there are some metaphorical Expressions used, which as they are circumstanced, and comparing one part of these Writings with another, can scarce mislead the meanest Understandings ? and I will undertake to say that whatever Opinion he has of the Stupidity of the *Jews*, they were not so senseless as to understand those Expressions in that Sense he puts upon them, tho' they all firmly believed the Facts.

He would have it believed that according to the literal obvious Sense of the Mosaick History, God is represented to the People as a *finite* circumscribed Being, appearing to the *Israelites* all along in the Shape of a Man, walking as such with them thro' the *Red Sea*, going at the Head of their Army as their General, and travelling up and down

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with them through the Wilderness, &c. whereas there is not one Passage in the whole Account, that represents God as appearing to the *Israelites* in *Human Shape*; but the very contrary is directly and strongly asserted, and that as the Foundation of the Laws that were given them. They are expressly forbidden to worship God by any Image or corporeal Representation whatsoever; or under *the Likeness of any Thing in Heaven and Earth*, and that because they saw *no manner of Similitude*, when the Lord spake unto them, *Deut. iv. 12, 15.* Where would have been the Force of this, if it had been represented to them that God continually walked among them, and before them in human Shape? All that can be gathered from the obvious Sense of the Mosaick Account literally understood is this; That as it pleased God for wise Ends to select the People of *Israel* as a peculiar People to himself, so in order to impress them with a more lively Sense of his immediate Presence, and divine Majesty, he manifested himself among them, by a visible *Cloud of Glory*, the illustrious *Symbol* and *Token* of his special Presence; which exhibited a wondrous Splendour without any human Shape or bodily Form. This Cloud of Glory conducted the People in their Journeyings through the Wilderness. Thither *Moses* had frequently recourse for Direction, and probably received Orders and Instructions, by a Voice proceeding from amidst that Glory. All this was indeed a marvellous Instance of Goodness and Condescension in the supreme Being, but it can never be proved to have any Thing in it absurd or unworthy of God, and inconsistent with his essential Attributes and Perfections. I suppose this Author himself will hardly deny that though God is every where essentially present, yet he can give more illustrious Displays and Exhibitions of his divine Presence and Majesty by a visible external Glory and Splendor in some

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Places, and on some Occasions than others; and that he can also, if he pleases, either by his own immediate Power, or by the Ministry of Angels, form an audible Voice, by which he may declare his Will to one or more among Mankind outwardly to their Ears as well as inwardly by immediate Impressions on the Mind. It doth not follow from either of these Suppositions, that God is a finite limited Being, or that his Essence is circumscribed, or confined to the particular Place, where it pleaseth him thus peculiarly to manifest his special Presence. Nor does it appear that the meanest of the *Jews* ever understood it so, who are every where taught in the Writings of *Moses* to form the noblest Conceptions of the divine Majesty and Greatness, as the Maker and Lord, the Preserver and Governour of the World, and as filling the whole Universe with his Glory; the God *in Heaven above, and in Earth beneath*, as it is expressed, *Deut. iv. 29.*

As to that Passage he produces where God is said to speak to *Moses Face to Face, as a Man speaketh to his Friend*; 'tis plain it is to be understood only of the clear open familiar Manner, in which God condescended to reveal himself to *Moses* above any of the other Prophets. The Apostle *Paul* useth such a Phrase as this to signify the Clearness and Perfection of our Knowledge in Heaven; that then we shall *not see through a Glass darkly, but shall see Face to Face*. And does it follow that because such a Phrase as this appears in the Writings of *Moses*, a Phrase which as it there stands has no Difficulty in it, and is very easy to be understood; that therefore his whole History is a *Fiction*, and the Facts there related, tho' told in a plain simple Manner, are all Hyperbole and Romance?

Will this Writer pretend that it is beneath the Majesty of God, to concern himself in so peculiar a manner for one particular People, and to grant them

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them such visible Tokens of his special Presence, and take them under his immediate Conduct and Government? But if it be not unworthy of his general Providence for him to take care of, and concern himself for *particular* Persons and their Affairs, I do not see how it can be proved inconsistent with his Glory and Perfection to manifest his Presence in a special manner, and to give remarkable Proofs of his tender Care towards a *whole Nation*, in order to keep them close to his Worship and Service, and secure a regard to the Laws he had been pleased to give them. All that can be said in that Case is, that it was a most amazing Condescension, and a wonderful Grace and Goodness, and so it is that he should concern himself with Mankind at all. And as this Author seems to think it unworthy of the divine Majesty to concern himself so particularly in the Direction and Government of that *People*, so there have been Persons that from pretended high Thoughts of God, have judged it unworthy of his Greatness to concern himself with *Men*, or their Affairs at all, and thus have been for complimenting him out of his Providence. And others have denied his continual Agency and Influence in the Government of the World, which they suppose to be a great Machine first made, and put in Motion by a divine Hand, and then left to itself, and to the Laws established in the Beginning; under pretence that it is unworthy of him continually to interpose in a way of immediate Agency: whom this Writer zealously opposes, and seems to account little better than *Atheists*.

But he urges it farther as another Absurdity in the literal Sense of the Story, "That such was the Interest of *Moses* with God, that he could make him do whatsoever he pleased. He often changed his Mind, when he had resolved to destroy the People; and prevailed with him to go further,

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“ when he had determined to leave them, and go
 “ no further: and this, lest the *Egyptians* should
 “ mock the God of *Israel*, and say, that he was
 “ not able to conduct them through the Wilder-
 “ nefs, and give them Possession of the Land
 “ which he had promised them, and for which
 “ he had engaged his Honour and Veracity for
 “ above 400 Years before, to do it at this very
 “ time. This was the main topical Argument,
 “ which *Moses* is said to have used with God, and
 “ by which he gained his Ends, in every thing
 “ but the main Point, which was the Conquest of
 “ the Country, which these *Israelites* were never
 “ able to do till *David's* Days, about 400 Years
 “ after the Promise to *Abraham* was expired. It
 “ is true, they conquered and took Possession of
 “ a small Part of the Country upon the Mountains;
 “ but they could not drive the Inhabitants out of
 “ the Plains, because they had *Chariots of Iron*,
 “ or because God never enabled them as *Infan-*
 “ *try* to stand before the *Canaanites* Horse,” p.
 252, 253.

As to *Moses's* interest with God, as he calls it,
 supposing *Moses* to have been what he really was,
 an excellent Person, a devout searer and lover and
 adorer of the Deity; I can see no absurdity in
 supposing that he had an interest with God, if by
 that be meant no more than that God had a re-
 gard to his humble and earnest Supplications. But
 that he could not *make God do whatsoever he*
pleased, as this Writer ridiculously expresseth it,
 is evident, because we are there expressly told that
 he could not procure that his *own Life* should be
 prolonged, so as to enter actually into the promised
 Land, though he earnestly desired it, see *Deut.*
iii. 23—26. In his Prayers for the People we may
 observe a deep *Humility* and profound *Reverence*
 for the divine Majesty, a fervent *Zeal* for the
 Glory of God, and for the Interest of true Reli-
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gion in the World, and a most affectionate Concern and *Love* for the People, whose Welfare he valued more than his own Life, or the particular Advancement of himself or his Family. These were noble and excellent Dispositions, and where is the Absurdity of supposing that a *wise* and *holy* and *merciful* God had a regard to the Supplications he offered for the People, flowing from such excellent Dispositions? Certainly, the Reflections the Author here makes are very little consistent with the Zeal he elsewhere seems to express for the Duty of Prayer, since they are really no other than the Objections that others advance against Prayer in general. When he talks of God's *changing his Mind*, and altering his Resolution upon *Moses's* addressing him; I ask, Is it in no case proper to apply to God by Prayer, for obtaining Blessings for ourselves or others, and for deprecating Evils, or averting threatned or deserved Judgments? and may it not well be supposed that God hath a regard to Prayer as a necessary *Condition* for obtaining these Blessings, or averting those Evils? And when he hearkens to those Prayers, he cannot be justly said to change his Mind, or alter his Purpose, since he does no other than what he had before determined to do. For he both foresaw those Prayers and determined to hear them, and not to confer those Blessings, or avert those Judgments, if those Prayers had not been offered. There is nothing in all this but what every Man must acknowledge, who stands up for Prayer as a Duty.

To apply this to the present Case: God had determined to punish and abandon the *Israelites* for their *Idolatry* and *Wickedness*, if *Moses* should not interpose and intercede by humble and earnest Supplications; but at the same time he perfectly knew that *Moses* would thus interpose, and had determined to grant his humble Request in their Behalf. And in this View all is perfectly consistent. He knew

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knew that his Threatning to forsake and punish them for their Sins, would give occasion to that good and excellent Man to plead with him by earnest Prayer, and thereby shew his Love to the People, and Zeal for the divine Glory, which Prayers he had determined to grant. And there was a manifest Propriety in it, that God should not pardon and restore the People but upon *Moses's* Intercession, as this tended to procure a greater Affection and Veneration for him in their Minds, and to engage them to pay a greater regard to the Laws he gave them in the name of God.

With regard to the *topical* Argument, as this Writer calls it, which *Moses* made use of in pleading with God for the *Israelites*; if he had fairly represented it, there would have appeared nothing in it absurd, or unfit for such a Man as *Moses* to make use of, as the Case was circumstanced, and for God to have a regard unto. If *Moses* prayed to God at all to avert deserved Judgments from the People, was it not proper for him to use Reasons or Arguments humbly to enforce his Petitions? One would think that this Author who would be thought such an Advocate for Prayer, and who passes such severe Censures on those who ridicule and discard it, should readily grant this. If it be allowable for us to offer up our Requests to God, then certainly it must be also allowed to be very proper for us to urge our Requests with such Reasons or Arguments as may be fit for reasonable Beings to offer to that God who condescends to admit our Supplications. Since this tends very much to the exercising and strengthening those good Affections and pious Dispositions, which it is one great Design of the Duty of Prayer to exercise and improve. Now I cannot see what properer Arguments *Moses* could have made use of as the Case was circumstanced, than what he did. For what Arguments can be more fit to be offered to the
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supreme Being, than those that are drawn from what is becoming his *Government* and *Excellencies*, his Wisdom, his Faithfulness and Truth, his Goodness and Mercy, and from a regard to the Honour of his Name, and the Interest of true Religion in the World? And such as these are the Arguments *Moses* makes use of, as appears from the several Passages that relate to this matter, see *Exod.* xxxii. 9, 14. *Numb.* xiv. 13—16. *Deut.* ix. 25—29. Though no doubt his Prayers were more at large than is there recorded, and delivered with the greatest Humility and Earnestness, and it is only a very short Abstract and Summary of them that is there given us. And the particular Argument which this Author is pleased to ridicule, was very proper, and of great force, if taken out of his ludicrous and sneering manner of representing it; viz. drawn from the *Reflections* the *Egyptians* and other idolatrous Nations would cast on the only true God, if he destroyed that People whom he had so miraculously delivered, and whom he seemed to have chosen peculiarly to himself; and the occasion they would thence take to *harden* themselves in their Idolatry, and in their opposition to God and his Worship; and to charge him with unmercifulness, with breach of Promise, or want of Power. All this *Moses* humbly represents in his Prayers to God; and God perfectly knew all this before *Moses* represented it, and had determined to act in a manner becoming his own supreme Wisdom and Glory. But it was his Will that *Moses* should thus plead with him in order to his shewing Favour to so guilty People, and averting the Judgments he had threatened, and they had deserved. In like manner, whenever God hath regard to the humble and earnest Prayers of good Men, he well knows beforehand all that they can urge and represent before him, yet he will have these things represented by themselves, as a *Condition* of his doing it for them. As

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As to what this Writer adds, as if God did not after all perform his Promise to *Abraham* and the *Israelites*, since they were not put in full Possession of the promised Land till the time of *David*, 400 Years after the Time fixed, for that Promise was expired; I need not say much to it, since he himself in several Passages of his Book acknowledges and asserts that this Promise was conditional; and that “*had the Conditions been performed by Abraham’s Family and Posterity, no doubt but the grant on God’s part had been made good,*” see p. 259. ’Tis certain that *Moses* declares to the *Israelites* in the most solemn Manner, calling Heaven and Earth to witness, that their obtaining the Possession of the promised Land, and continuing in it depended on their Obedience to the divine Law, and keeping close to his true Worship and Service, and that otherwise they themselves should perish out of the Land, see *Deut. iv. 25, 26, &c.* and many other Passages to the same purpose. To which it may be added, that it is most expressly again and again declared and foretold, that God would not drive out the *Canaanites* from before them all at once, but by little and little, see *Exod. xxiii. 29, 30, 31. Deut. vii. 22, 23.* which was most literally and punctually fulfilled. It is scarce worth while to take Notice of his little Sneers, though often repeated by the late Writers on that side, concerning God’s not being able to drive out the Inhabitants of the Vallies, because they had Chariots of Iron. The Passage referr’d to is *Judg. i. 19. And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the Inhabitants of the Mountain, but could not drive out the Inhabitants of the Valley, because they had Chariots of Iron.* All that can be fairly gathered from this Passage, is this, that the Tribe of *Judah* attacked the Inhabitants of the Mountains, and God prospered and gave them Success; but they suffered themselves to be affrighted and disheartened

heartened by the iron Chariots of the *Canaanites* that dwelt in the Vallies, and therefore durst not venture to attack them. And this their *Diffidence* and Distrust, and not the Strength of the *Canaanites*, was the true Cause of their not being able to subdue them. When the Tribes of *Epbraim* and *Manasseh* expressed the same Apprehensions, *Josua* reproves them for their Fears, and assures them that if they did not suffer themselves to be discouraged, they should drive out the *Canaanites*, though they were strong, and had Iron Chariots, Josh. xvii. 16, 18. And certain it is that the Reason why the Men of *Judab*, could not drive out the *Canaanites*, was not, as this Writer is pleased ludicrously to represent it, because the Lord never enabled the Israelites as Infantry to stand before the *Canaanites Horse*. For *Josua* attacked and destroyed a mighty Host of the *Canaanites*, though they had *Horses and Chariots very many*, Josh. xi. 4, 7, 8, 9. and afterwards we find, *Sisera* and his numerous Army with 300 Chariots of Iron, was entirely defeated by a small Number of *Israelites* under *Barak*, Judg. iv. 3, 7, 15.

This is all that this Writer is pleased to offer to shew that *Moses's* History when taken in the literal Sense is more absurd and romantick than *Homer*, or *Esop's Fables*, or *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. But though he has discovered a very strong Inclination to prove this, nothing can be more miserable than the Attempts he has made this way. For any thing that he offers to the contrary, *Moses's* History still holds good; and the miraculous extraordinary Facts were really done as recorded; and if they were, they yield an invincible Attestation to the Truth and Divinity of the Laws thus attested and confirmed, and manifestly shew them to have proceeded from God. And it cannot without the highest Absurdity be supposed, that such glorious Exhibitions of the divine Power and Majesty should

should ever have been given in favour of an Imposition.

I shall next proceed to consider what our Author offers against the divine Original of the Law of *Moses* from the Authority of *St. Paul*, and the pretended Opposition and Inconsistency between that Law and the New Testament.

C H A P. III.

The Author's Arguments against the Law of Moses from the Authority of St. Paul considered. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Apostle Paul, strongly assert and confirm the divine Original of the Law of Moses. The diminishing and degrading manner in which that Apostle seems sometimes to speak of that Law, accounted for. The Instances the Author produces to shew that there was no end of the Law but what the Apostle expressly contradicts, examined. The Attempt he makes to prove that there was no such typical or mystical Sense of the Law as St. Paul supposes in his Arguings with the Jews. No Absurdity, but a Beauty and Harmony in supposing that what is obscurely hinted at in the Law is more clearly revealed in the Gospel.

THIS Author proposes the Question to be debated, “ whether the positive and ceremonial Law of *Moses*, commonly called the levitical Law, or the Law concerning their Priesthood, was originally a divine Institution or Revelation from God, to be afterwards nullified, abolished, and set aside by another Revelation; or whether it was a meer Piece of carnal worldly Policy.” This latter part of the Question is what he undertakes to maintain, and which is more extraordinary he declares, that “ if he can-

“ not make it appear that *St. Paul*, when he comes to be rightly understood, is plainly on his side, he will give up the Argument,” *p. 23.*

He manages this in a great many Words with some Digressions from *p. 24.* to *p. 80.* But though he seems in putting the Question to confine it to the part of the Law of *Moses* that relates to the Priesthood, yet it is plain he intends it against the divine Original of the *whole* Law; and his Arguments, if they prove any thing, prove that it was wholly a *political Institution*; and that no part of it came by immediate Revelation from God. And it is evident either the whole Law was by immediate Revelation from God, or no part of it was so, since *Moses* equally professed to receive the whole from God; and the many extraordinary miraculous Attestations that were given to it, if they confirmed that Law at all, extended equally to the Confirmation of the whole.

Before I enter on the particular Consideration of what this Writer offers on this Head, I shall first shew that the Apostle *Paul* did himself believe, and all along in the plainest Manner suppose and assert, that the Law of *Moses* was originally a divine Institution or Revelation from God. And no Words can be more strong and full to this Purpose than that remarkable Passage, *2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.* He is there writing to his beloved *Timothy* a little before his own Death, whom this Author represents as the *only Teacher in that age, who heartily joined with the Apostle Paul as his faithful Helper and Fellow-labourer*, *p. 72.* And was of the same Opinion with him in the Controversy concerning the Law of *Moses*, in opposition to the Christian *Jews*. The Apostle might therefore use freedom with him, and was under no Temptation to disguise his Sentiments to him, as our Author insinuates he was frequently obliged to do on other Occasions. And he there commends *Timothy*, for that

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from a Child he had known *the holy Scriptures*; and declares that they *were able to make him wise unto Salvation*. Where by the Holy Scriptures he incontestibly refers to the Writings of the Old Testament, *viz.* those of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, which were the only Scriptures *Timothy* could have been acquainted with from his Childhood. And he adds, that *all Scripture* (or the whole Scripture) *is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*. No Declaration can possibly be plainer for the divine Authority and Inspiration of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, whose Writings he manifestly understands by what he there calls the *Scripture*. And indeed nothing is more usual with this *Apostle* in all his Epistles, than when he brings Passages out of the Law of *Moses* to call it the *Scripture*, and cite it as of divine Authority, see *Rom.* iv. 3. ix. 17. *Gal.* iii. 8. iv. 30. *1 Tim.* v. 8. And having occasion to mention a particular Command of the Law of *Moses*, and which seemed to be of a civil Nature, he supposes that *God* gave that Command, *1 Cor.* ix. 9. He mentions it as the signal *Advantage* of the *Jews* above the *Gentiles*, that *unto them were committed the Oracles of God*, *Rom.* iii. 1, 2. And of those Oracles the Law of *Moses* was certainly regarded as a principal Part, *Acts* vii. 38. And again, that *to them, viz. the Jews pertained the Covenant, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God*, *Rom.* ix. 4. Where he evidently refers to the *Levitical Service* and Worship. In the whole Epistle to the *Hebrews*, where it is his great Design to shew the superior Excellency of the *Evangelical Dispensation* above the *Mosaical*, he all along evidently supposes the Law of *Moses*, and the manner of Worship and divine Service there prescribed, to have been originally from *God*, and of divine Appointment. He expressly saith, that *Christ Jesus was faithful*

him that appointed him, as also *Moses* was faithful in all his House, Heb. iii. 2. 5. Where it is undeniably evident, that he supposes that God sent and appointed *Moses* as truly as he did *Jesus Christ*, and that *Moses* was faithful, and kept close to what God had appointed. With respect particularly to the Levitical Priesthood, he supposes this to have been of divine Institution, and that *Aaron* was called of God to be High Priest, and did not take this Honour unto himself, Heb. v. 4. and Heb. viii. 5. he saith, *the Priests under the Law serve to the Example and Shadow of heavenly Things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle; for see, (saith he) that thou make all things according to the Pattern showed to thee in the Mount.* Where he expressly represents *Moses* as receiving Orders from God by divine Revelation relating to the Sanctuary and Priesthood. And when he sets himself to prove Heb. viii. that the first Covenant, that is, the *Mosaical Oeconomy* was abolished, he still supposes at the same time, that it had God for its Author, as well as the second more excellent and perfect Dispensation that was to succeed it. And this also appears from the Quotation he produced from the Prophet *Jeremiah* to prove it; *Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah, not according to the Covenant which I made with their Fathers, when I took them by the Hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt, Heb. viii. 8, 9, 10. see also Heb. ix. 18—20.* Where it is plainly implied and asserted that God was the Author of the first Covenant, made with the Children of *Israel* by the Hand of *Moses*.

From all this I think it is as evident as the plainest Words can make it, that the Apostle *Paul* still represents the *Mosaical Law*, and particularly that part of it relating to the *Priesthood* and *Ceremonies*

monies to have been originally a divine Institution. And indeed in this Belief he only followed the Sentiments of his great Lord and Master *Jesus Christ*, who in all his Discourses to the People and to his own Disciples, whenever he hath occasion to mention the Law of *Moses*, always speaks of it in a manner that shews he regarded it as originally of divine Appointment. He declares in the most exprefs manner that he *came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them*; that is, he came not to deny and subvert their divine Authority, but to fulfil the true and proper Design and End of them; to confirm and perfect the moral Precepts, to fulfil and give the Substance of the Types and Ceremonies, which the Apostle tells us were the *Shadow of good Things to come, but the Body is of Christ*, and to accomplish the Predictions there contained. And he declares that *till Heaven and Earth pass away, one jot or Tittle should not pass away from the Law till all be fulfilled*, Matt. v. 17, 18. Luke xvi. 17. And I do not know whether any Words could more strongly assert its divine Original, and that no Part of it should fail of its just Accomplishment. He severely reproves the *Pharisees* for *teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, and making void the *Law of God by their Traditions*; and by the Law of God he understands the Commandments given by *Moses*, which he there calls the *Commandments of God*, and the *Word of God* in opposition to *human Inventions and Traditions*, Mark xii. 3, 9, 13. In the remarkable Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, he refers them to the *Law of Moses* and the *Prophets*, as exhibiting a sufficient Signification of the divine Will, and that if they did not *hear*, that is, believe and obey them, neither would they be *persuaded though one rose from the Dead*, Luke xvi. 29—31. He tells the *Sadducees*, that they erred, *not knowing the Scriptures, and the Power of God*, and

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and he explains what he means by the *Scriptures*, by referring to *the Book of Moses*, Mark xii. 24—26. And lastly, after his Resurrection, when beginning at *Moses and the Prophets*, he expounded to his Disciples in all the *Scriptures* the things concerning himself, Luke xxiv. 39. And again, when he said to them, *These are the Words which I spake unto you, whilst I was with you, that all Things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me*, ver. 44, 45. Can any Thing be a plainer Proof, that he would have his Disciples regard the Writings of *Moses* and the *Prophets* as of divine Original, and containing a true Revelation from God?

Having thus shewn that the Apostle *Paul*, in conformity to the Example of our blessed Saviour himself, asserted the divine Original of the Law of *Moses*, let us now consider the account this Writer gives of the Opinion of that great Apostle in this Matter, by whose Judgment he pretends he is willing to be determined.

He represents it as the Sense of the Apostle *Paul*, that “ the ritual and ceremonial Law of *Moses* was carnal, worldly, and deadly, and in its original, proper and literal Sense had neither any thing of Truth or Goodness in it, but was a blinding enslaving Constitution, and such an intolerable Yoke of Darkness and Bondage, Tyranny and Vassalage, Wrath and Misery, that neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear. And how St. *Paul* could declare all this, with any Notion or Belief of the ritual ceremonial Law and Priesthood, as a divine Institution or Revelation from God, he would be glad to know, p. 29, 30. and he asks, p. 32. whether God can *establisb Iniquity by a Law*, or whether a Law, which in St. *Paul*’s Opinion introduced and confirmed a state of civil and religious Blindness and Bigotry, Tyranny

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“ and Slavery, could in the same Judgment have
 “ been originally a divine Institution and an im-
 “ mediate Revelation from God? and he observes
 “ that it was not only the Abuses of the Law that
 “ he lays his Charge against, but that it was the
 “ Law itself in its own intrinsick Constitution and
 “ natural Tendency, that in *St. Paul's* Language
 “ and *Stile* was *carnal, worldly, and deadly.*” He
 thinks these to be plain Declarations that “ such
 “ a Law could never be of divine Institution, and
 “ consequently there needed no new Revelation to
 “ set it aside,” *p. 51, 52.* And whereas, “ *St.*
 “ *Paul* argues for setting aside the Obligation of
 “ the ceremonial Law, because it was fulfilled,
 “ abolished, and done away, by the Death of
 “ Christ; and because the Law having been ori-
 “ ginally intended only as a Figure and Type of
 “ the better Things to come, that is, of Christ
 “ and the Gospel Dispensation, it was hereby to
 “ cease, and to be abolished for ever:” this Wri-
 ter takes upon him to affirm, that “ he did not
 “ argue thus from the Truth of Things, and on
 “ the Foot of any Revelation from God in that
 “ case made to him, but argued *ad hominem* only
 “ against the *Jews*, as endeavouring upon pruden-
 “ tial and political Principles to set aside that ab-
 “ surd, tyrannical, blinding, and enslaving Law
 “ of his Country. For that the ceremonial Law
 “ never had any repeal or abrogation by any new
 “ Revelation he thinks is plain from the Practice
 “ of *St. Paul* himself, who when he could not
 “ carry this Point of setting aside and abrogating
 “ the ceremonial Law; submitted to it as long as
 “ he lived, as did all the *Jewish* Profelytes in the
 “ Apostolical Times: he submitted to it, not as
 “ binding the Conscience in Point of Religion and
 “ Acceptance with God, but in his political Capa-
 “ city, as the Law of his Country, and as a mate-
 “ rial of human Liberty. Whereas had he thought

“ it an Original, immediate, positive Institution
“ from God, and afterwards null’d and abrogated
“ by the same Authority, he could not have sub-
“ mitted to it, consistent with his declared Judg-
“ ment and Conscience,” *p.* 52—54. Finally he de-
“ clares, that the truth is, *St. Paul* was the great Free-
“ thinker of his Age, the bold and brave Defen-
“ der of Reason against Authority, in opposition
“ to those who had set up a wretched Scheme of
“ Superstition, Blindness, and Slavery, contrary to
“ all Reason and common Sense, and this under
“ the specious popular Pretence of a divine Insti-
“ tution and Revelation from God,” *p.* 71.

Before I proceed to a distinct consideration of what this Writer here offers, I would first observe what a strange representation he makes of the Apostle *Paul*, at the same Time that he affects to commend and to admire him, and pretends to *have as good an Opinion of that great Apostle as any Man can have*, *p.* 21. It cannot be denied that in all his Epistles he cites the *Mosaical* and *Prophetical* Writings, as of divine Authority; he delivered those Writings to all the Churches of the Gentiles among whom he preached, and whom he instructed in the Christian Religion, under the notion of *Scripture*, or divinely inspired Writings; and yet at the same Time, according to this Author, he was persuaded that the Law of *Moses* was no Revelation from God at all, but a pernicious Imposture put upon the World, in the Name of God; a meer Piece of carnal Policy, and one of the most absurd, and tyrannical, and unreasonable Constitutions that ever were imposed upon any Nation. Again, he declared that many of the Rites of the Law of *Moses*, in their original Intention, were of a figurative and typical nature, designed to prefigure Christ, and his Benefits, and to be *the Shadow of good Things to come*; whereas, according to this Writer he himself knew and believed that

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they had no such original Intention and Design at all. *He insisted upon it that he had receiv'd an immediate Revelation from God* concerning the abrogating the ceremonial Law, as our Author himself acknowledges, p. 79. and yet he represents him as having proceeded wholly upon political and prudential Principles; and that he himself well knew he had received no Revelation from God at all relating to that Matter, but only made the *Jews* believe so, that he might the better carry his Point with them. I cannot see how a Man that could prevaricate at so strange a rate, could deserve to be called a *bold and brave Defender of Religion and Liberty*; or how this is consistent with the Character he elsewhere gives of him, that he *was a Man of the strictest Honesty and Integrity*, p. 69. I know not what Scheme of Morals our *Moral Philosopher* hath formed to himself for the regulating of his own Conduct; but such a Conduct is no way suitable to the Character of the Apostle *Paul*, or the Principles upon which he acted. He was far from allowing that Maxim, that *it is lawful to do evil that good may come of it*. He rejects the Imputation of it with the utmost Abhorrence, and passes a most severe Censure on those that govern themselves by such Maxims, for he pronounces that *their Damnation is just*, Rom. iii. 8. Tho' he always shewed the greatest Condescension and Tenderness for weak Consciences, yet he never allowed himself in deliberate Fraud and Imposture, or to do Things contrary to Truth and good Conscience, under pretence of complying with their Prejudices. He manifested on all Occasions an unshaken and unparall'd Fortitude and Constancy in the Cause of God, and Truth, and Religion, even tho' he expos'd himself by it to the greatest Sufferings. In a word, he could say, that *his rejoicing was this, the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not in fleshly Wisdom, but by the* Grace

Grace of God, he had his Conversation in the World, 2 Cor. i. 12. It is certain therefore this excellent Apostle was incapable of a Conduct so little reconcileable to Truth or common Honesty, as that which this Writer ascribes to him. And therefore those Expressions in which he seems to speak in disadvantageous Terms of the Law of *Moses*, could never be intended by him in that Sense which our Author thinks fit to put upon them, and which is directly contrary to his declared Sentiments.

But let us consider this matter more distinctly. It is plain that the Apostle *Paul* had a great Controversy relating to the Law of *Moses* with some *Judaizing* Teachers of that Age, to which he refers in almost all his Epistles. There were many that had then conceived a very high and extravagant Opinion of that Law, as so absolutely perfect in itself that it was never to be changed or altered, nor any of its Rites abrogated; but was to be of standing perpetual Obligation, and was to extend to all Nations; that a strict Observance of all the Commands and ritual Disjunctions there prescribed, was the only way of Justification and obtaining the Favour of God, and that without this the *Gentiles* themselves could not be saved. This was the Doctrine of the Persons mentioned, *Acts* xv. 24. and of those against whom the Apostle argues in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, who *constrained* the Christian Converts to be circumcised, and to observe the Law, that is, obliged them to it as absolutely necessary to Salvation, even though they had been *Gentiles*.

Now in opposition to these Persons St. *Paul* doth not alledge as this Author would have it, that the Law of *Moses* was not originally of divine Institution. For this he all along supposes, yea, and directly and strongly asserts it, as hath been shewn; but that it was never designed to be of perpetual Obligation; that it was an *imperfect* Dispensation, suited to the imperfect State of the Church; and
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fell greatly *short* of the clear Light, the Spiritual Glory, and perfect Liberty of the Gospel. That in the Intention of God, and in its original proper Design, the Law was a *temporary* subservient Dispensation, designed to make way for a more pure and spiritual and perfect Dispensation of which *Christ* was the Author. That therefore these false Teachers greatly mistook and perverted the original Design of that Law, and the End for which it was given; and that taken in their perverted Sense, and as opposed by them to the Grace of the Gospel, it would prove of bad Consequence to those that put their Trust in it, and expected Justification from it. But he abhors the Charge as if he supposed the Law to be *Sin*, or to bring *Death* in its own nature, see *Rom. vii. 7—13.* which yet is the Representation this Writer thinks fit to make of the Apostle's Sense; as if he held the Law to be in itself *deadly*, and that the establishing the Mosaick Constitution was *establishing Iniquity by a Law*. He expressly denies that in its original Constitution and Design it was at all *against the promises of God*, *Gal. iii. 21.* And upon the whole shews that it was designed for a time till *the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made*, *Gal. iii. 19.* and its Rites and Ordinances were *imposed until the time of Reformation*, *Heb. ix. 10.* that is, till the introducing that more perfect Dispensation to which the other was intended to be subservient and preparatory. That the *Jews* were kept *under it, shut up* or separated from other Nations, under its strict Discipline and Injunctions, *till the Faith should be revealed*, *Gal. iii. 23.* And that now *Christ* was come, he hath *abolished the Law of Commandments*, and hath taken down the *Partition-wall* between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Eph. xi. 15.* so that now we are no longer *under the Law*, but *under Grace*, *Rom. vi. 14.* This is evidently the Apostle *Paul's* Scheme, the Doctrine he teacheth with regard to the

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Law of *Moses*. In which, directly contrary to what this Writer alledges, it is plainly supposed that the Law of *Moses* was originally a *divine* Institution or Revelation from God, which was afterwards abolished and set aside by another Revelation: Though it was not so *immediately* and expressly abolished as to render it absolutely unlawful for any Persons at that time to observe those legal rites. The Apostle *Paul* was for shewing great Condescension to those believing *Jews*, who though they looked for Salvation through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, yet from a conscientious Scruple were for observing the Mosaical Rites themselves, but did not impose them upon the *Gentiles*. And he thought it lawful on some Occasions to observe those Rites himself in condescension to their Infirmitie. And his Practice and Sentiments in this matter were agreeable to those of the other Apostles. Whilst in the mean time care was taken by the Doctrine they all taught, to remove the Prejudices of the *Jewish* Christians, and to give them a full View of the Liberty with which Christ came to make them free. But I shall have occasion to consider this at large, and set the Conduct of the Apostle *Paul* and the other Apostles in a proper Light, and shew the Harmony there was between them, when I come more particularly to examine the Objections the Author raises on this Head against the New Testament.

Let us now consider what he produces to prove, that St. *Paul*, contrary to his own express Declarations, did not look upon the Law of *Moses* to be of divine original. And what he seems chiefly to insist upon is, the disadvantageous Character the Apostle gives of that Law, representing it as a *Yoke of Bondage*, and its ordinances as *carnal*, &c. But it is not hard to account for the manner in which he speaks of the Law of *Moses*, if we keep his Scheme and Design in view.

It is certain that the Apostle represents those that are under the Law as in a State of *Bondage*, and a Subjection to its rites he calls a *Yoke of Bondage*. This our Author often repeats, as if it was in St. Paul's opinion, *an enslaving Constitution contrary to the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind, a State of civil and religious Tyranny and Slavery, an intolerable Yoke which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear*. It is to be observed that these last Expressions which the Author ascribes to the Apostle Paul, p. 29. and which are at least as strong as any that he makes use of, were used not by him but by St. Peter, Acts xv. 10. and yet this Writer himself will not pretend that Peter intended by these Expressions to signify, that the Law of Moses was not of divine Original; since all along he supposes him to be at the Head of the Judaizing Christians, who stood up for the divine Authority and Obligation of that Law in opposition to St. Paul. All that he intends to signify by this manner of Expression, is only that the ritual Injunctions and Ceremonies of the Law were difficult and *burdensome* in the Observance: And it is a way of speaking common almost to all Languages for Persons to be said not to be able to *bear* a Thing which they cannot bear without great Labour and Difficulty. And yet those numerous Rites prescribed in the Law however burdensome they might be in the Observance, were instituted for very wise Ends and valuable Purposes, and were very proper for the State of the Church and People to whom they were given. And this is what the Apostle Paul plainly signifies even in that very Passage where he represents the being *under the Law* as a State of *Bondage*, Gal. iv. 3. 9. He had observed in the preceding Chapter, ver. 24, 25. that *the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, but after that faith is come we are no longer under a Schoolmaster*. Where it is evident that he speaks not meerly of the moral

Law as the Author would have it, p. 26. but of the ceremonial Law. And in pursuance of the same Metaphor he saith, *ch. iv. 1, 2, 3.* Now I say that the Heir as long as he is a Child, differeth nothing from a Servant, though he be Lord of all: But is under Tutors and Governors, until the Time appointed of the Father, even so we when we were Children were in Bondage under the Elements of the World. Where it is plain what he means by Bondage, not that the Law is a blinding enslaving Constitution, contrary to the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind, but it is such a Bondage as an Heir is under whilst he is a Child, the Bondage of being under Tutors, and Governors, and subject to a Discipline, which though it may seem hard and severe yet is useful and necessary: So the various Injunctions of the Law, though they might seem a troublesome Yoke, yet were very useful and well suited to the State of the Church, at the time in which it was given. But as it would be wrong to keep the Heir in such a Subjection, and under the Discipline of a Child, when he is out of his non-Age, and arrived to a State of Maturity; and it would argue a very strange and mean Temper of Mind for him to be willing to put himself under that *Pædagogy* again, or to exercise himself in his childish Rudiments, when he had obtained his manly Freedom: So it would be a strange Conduct when we are freed by the Gospel from the *Pædagogy* of the Law, and brought under a more manly and perfect Dispensation, to be willing to return to it again. On this account he might justly expostulate as he does, *ver. 9.* *How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly Elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in Bondage?* and, *Stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage,* *ch. v. 1.*

And whereas in the Passage now cited, *Gal. iv. 3.* the Apostle call the Mosaick Rites, the *Elements* of the

the World, and weak and beggarly Elements, and elsewhere, calls its Ordinances carnal Ordinances, Heb. ix. 10. it is evident that his Design is not to signify that the Ceremonial Law was not originally a divine Institution, but a meer Piece of carnal worldly Policy, which is the Interpretation this Writer puts upon those Expressions: But as he compares their being under the Law to an Heir's being under the Discipline of Tutors and Governors whilst he is a Child, so carrying on the same Metaphor he calls the Mosaick Rites the Elements or Rudiments of the World. As an Heir is under Tutors and Governors until the Time appointed of the Father; even so when we were Children, were in Bondage under the Elements of the World. It is an allusion to the way of instructing Children, he calls them the Elements στοιχια, so the Grammarians call the first Principles or Letters, out of which the Syllables are compounded, that are afterwards formed into Words. So that he compares the being under the legal rites, to Children's beginning first to learn their Letters, or being entered into their first Rudiments. And he calls them the Elements or Rudiments of the World, to signify that with respect to the matter of them they were taken from the things of this World, and were of an inferior earthly nature compared with the more sublime and spiritual Dispensation of the Gospel. Under the Law the People were instructed in a manner suitable to their State of childish Weakness; for they were as yet imperfect and rude in the Knowledge of Religion, nor fitted for the Simplicity of a pure and spiritual Institution, in which there were but few external Rites. It pleased God therefore to deal with them as Children, and to exercise their Obedience by employing them in many inferior ritual Services in condescension to their Infirmity, till the proper Season came for their being raised to a more pure and noble and spiritual Worship. Maimonides gives pretty much the same account

count, and yet, I believe, no body will pretend to say that he denied the Law of *Moses* to be of divine original, or looked upon it to be a meer Piece of carnal worldly Policy. He supposes that as God did not bring the *Israelites* directly, and all at once into *Canaan*, but after a long Circuit through the Wilderness, so he did not give the People the best and most exalted Scheme of Religion at first, but such as they were capable of. He condescended to their Weakness, and brought them on gradually as they could bear it that they might arrive at last to the thing he principally aimed at, right Apprehensions of him, and the effectual forsaking of Idolatry. This is the Substance of a remarkable Passage in *Maimonides*, *More Nevuch*. P. III. cap. 32. And in the same Chapter he also observes, that as because Animals when they are born are tender and not fit to be nourished with dry or strong Meat, therefore God hath provided Milk for them, that by such a kind of moist Diet suited to the Temperament of their Bodies they might be nourished, till by Degrees they obtain Strength and Firmness; so there is something like this, in the manner of Government of the great and good God with regard to several things in the Law. And he applies this Observation particularly to some of the Rites there prescribed, and to the pompous external way of Worship by Priests, Temple, and Sacrifices, which he supposes to be instituted in condescension to their Weakness, because the People could not then bear a more spiritual and exalted way of Worship.

It appears then that in the Judgment of the wisest among the *Jews* themselves, who are most zealous for the divine Authority of the Law of *Moses*, the Representation the Apostle *Paul* makes of the comparative Imperfection of the Law of *Moses* as a Dispensation suited to the Weakness and to the imperfect State of the Church and People at that time, was not inconsistent with the Belief of its having been

been originally appointed by God himself. But especially the consistency of this appears if it be farther considered, that the Apostle represents the legal Rites not only as instituted in condescension to their Weakness, but at the same time as designed and contrived by divine Wisdom to be *Shadows and Types of good things to come*, and preparatory to a more excellent and perfect State of things that was to be introduced under the *Messiah*.

When therefore he calls the legal Rites *weak and beggarly Elements or Rudiments*, he speaks in Opposition to those who extravagantly extolled these Rites as in themselves so perfect and excellent, that they were never to be abolished, or to give way to a more perfect Dispensation. And it is in the same View that he declares concerning the Law, that it was *weak and unprofitable*, Heb. vii.—18, 19. *There was a disannulling of the Commandment going before for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof.* He doth not intend by this to intimate as if it was in its original Design absolutely unprofitable and good for nothing; for we find that elsewhere, in answer to that Question, *What Advantage then bath the Jew? or what Profit is there of Circumcision?* he answers, *much every way! chiefly because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God*, Rom. iii. 1, 2. and by the Oracles of God we are there in a special manner to understand the Law of Moses, who as St. Stephen speaks, *received the lively Oracles to give unto us*, Acts vii. 38. But what the Apostle means by there calling the Law especially relating to the Priesthood *weak and unprofitable*, he himself explains in the Words immediately following: For he adds, *that the Law made nothing perfect*, and a little before he had shewed that *Perfection was made by the Levitical Priesthood*, ver. 2. His Design is to signify that the Mosaical Æconomy was never intended to be the *last and most perfect* Dispensation, and therefore it was wrong to set it up as of abso-

lute Necessity, and of universal and perpetual Obligation ; but it was designed to prepare and make way for a more glorious and perfect Dispensation which was to succeed it.

In like manner when he calls the *Ordinances* under the Law *carnal Ordinances*, *δικαιώματα σαρκός*, *Ordinances of the Flesh*, or relating to the Flesh, *Heb. ix. 10.* his meaning is not as this Writer seems willing to understand it, as if they were in themselves of an *evil* corrupt Nature and Tendency, which is sometimes the import of the Word *carnal* in Scripture, but meerly as he himself explains it, *ver. 13.* that they *sanctified to the purifying of the Flesh*, and could not of themselves, and by any virtue of their own, *purge the Soul or Conscience* from Sin, but were the Types and Shadows of greater and better Things ; and therefore in that very Passage he supposes them to be *imposed, till the times of Reformation*, that is, till the bringing in of a more perfect Scheme of Religion, for which the other was designed to be preparatory.

The same Observation may be applied to that Passage where he calls the Law establishing the Levitical Priesthood *the Law of a carnal Commandment*, he is far from intending to signify by that Expression that it was a meer political Engine and *human* Invention ; for he evidently supposes that Commandment to be from God in the very Passage where he calls it a *carnal Commandment* ; but he calls it so because it related to a Priesthood managed by frail mortal Men, and was a Commandment of a *temporary* Nature. That this is his Meaning there is evident from the Opposition he puts between *the Law of a carnal Commandment* and *the Power of an endless Life*, *Heb. vii. 16.* where he saith ; *that Christ was made a Priest not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life.* And again, *ver. 28. the Law maketh Men High-Priests which have Infirmary ; but the*

Word of the Oath which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who was consecrated for evermore.

Upon the whole, if we will allow the Apostle Paul to explain himself, it manifestly appears, that when he speaks of the Law of *Moses* in seemingly disparaging Terms, it never was his Intention by any of those Expressions, to insinuate that the Law of *Moses* was not of divine Original, for he every where supposes that it was ordained and appointed by God himself; but in opposition to those who set it up for a compleat and perfect Dispensation, he shews the comparative Imperfection of it when set in Competition with that more perfect Dispensation which our *Saviour* introduced by the Gospel, and to which it was designed to be preparatory. Thus he saith speaking of the Mosaical Oeconomy, that *that which was glorious had no Glory in this Respect, by reason of the Glory that excelleth*, 2 Cor. iii. 10. where he represents it as having *no Glory*, not absolutely, for he there expressly saith that it *was glorious*; but it had no Glory when compared to the more perfect *excelling* Glory of the Gospel Dispensation. In like manner the other Expressions he makes use of with regard to the Law are not to be understood in a strict and absolute, but in a comparative Sense.

But this Writer farther argues, that the Apostle Paul could not look upon the Law of *Moses* to be of divine Institution, because he teaches things directly contrary to that Law. He says, *the plain Truth of the Matter was, that St. Paul preached a new Doctrine contrary to Moses and the Prophets*, p. 41. But it is certain that if the Apostle Paul himself may be depended on for giving a right account of his own Sentiments, *He believed all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets*, Acts xxiv. 14. And he said *none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come*, Acts xxvi. 22. he preached a new Doctrine indeed, and published a new Dispensation, but not contrary unto, but perfectly

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fectly consistent with *Moses* and the *Prophets*, to which they were designed to be preparatory and subservient.

But let us see how he proves the Charge. He goes on to say, "that there is not one End, Use, or Purpose of the ritual Law as declared by *Moses*, but what is directly contradicted and denied by this Apostle. This he proves, "first because *Moses* delivered the whole Law to the *Israelites*, as a perpetual standing Ordinance or everlasting Covenant between God and them throughout all their Generations to the End of the World; St. *Paul* on the contrary declares it to be only an occasional temporary thing, never intended for Perpetuity, but to last only for a few Ages," p. 241. But it does not appear from *Moses* that the Law was designed for Perpetuity, so as never to give way to another Dispensation, as if God himself would never change or abrogate any of these Laws: Nor does he any where say, as this Writer represents it, that the Law was to continue to be observed by them to the End of the World. That the *Hebrew* Phrase which we translate for *ever* and *everlasting* does not always signify a perpetual Duration, or a Duration to the End of the World, is so well known, that it is unworthy of any Man that pretends to Learning to draw an Argument merely from those Expressions. If *Moses* had expressly called the whole Law an *everlasting* Covenant, which he no where does, no Argument could be drawn from it to shew that it was intended to continue to the End of the World. To *Abraham's* Seed the Land of *Canaan* is promised for an *everlasting* Possession, Gen. xxvii. 8. and yet *Moses* expressly foretels that they should be expelled that Land and scattered among all Nations. Nor does that other Phrase, *throughout all their Generations*, prove that it was designed to be of perpetual and unalterable Obligation; tho' *Moses* never uses that Word *throughout all their Generations*, speaking of the Observation of the Law or any of its Ordinances,

but only that it should be observed *throughout their Generations*, or as it is often expressed, *in their Generations*. And that this Phrase is not necessarily to be understood of a perpetual Duration, or a Duration to the End of the World, is evident from many Passages. Thus the Psalmist observes, speaking of rich Worldlings, *their inward Thought is that their Houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling Places to all Generations*, Psalm xlix. 11. Not as if they thought their Houses would continue in strictness to the End of the World, which no Man in his Senses could once suppose, but that they should continue for a long time to them and to their Posterity after them. See also *Lev. xxv. 29, 30*. It was not proper that it should be expressly declared in the Law itself that it was an occasional temporary Dispensation only to continue for a time. This might have diminished their regard for the Law, and they might upon this Pretence have thrown off the Observance of it before the proper Season came. The plain Design of those Phrases, that they were to observe the legal Ordinances *for ever, and throughout their Generations*, was to signify to them that they were to observe them always in their successive Generations, till God should signify his Will to the contrary; that it was to last for ever, so as never to be abrogated by any human Authority; nor were the People themselves to cast off the Obligation of it, meerly by an act of their own upon any pretence whatsoever. But that they might expect a new Law and new Injunctions from God, Moses himself signifies to them as plainly as was proper for him in that remarkable Passage, *Deut. xviii. 17, 18, 19*. where he tells the People, that the Lord their God would raise up from the midst of them a Prophet like unto him, and that unto him should they hearken; and that God would put his Words into his Mouth, and he should speak unto them, all that God should command him, and that it should come to pass, that whosoever would

not hearken unto his Words, God would require it of him. It is expressly said concerning the ordinary subsequent Prophets, which arose in Israel, that none of them was like unto Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 10. and God himself declares how much Moses was superior to the other Prophets, Numb. xii. 6, 7, 8. but here Moses tells the People, that God would raise up from among them a Prophet like unto him, that is, not an ordinary Prophet, but one of peculiar Eminence, that should like Moses give them Laws in the Name of God himself, and to whom they were indispensably obliged to hearken, and to pay an intire Obedience. This was sufficient to have directed them to look for another Law-giver, and might naturally lead their Thoughts to the promised Messiah, of whom they had an Expectation derived to them from their Fathers. And afterwards as the Time drew nearer, the Abolition of the Law of Moses was more plainly signified. The Prophets intimated clearly enough that a new Dispensation was to be introduced, and a new Covenant different from that which God made with their Fathers when he brought them out of the Land of Egypt, Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. The ceasing of the Aaronical Priesthood, and consequently of the Law of Moses, is signified, when it is foretold with the greatest Solemnity, that God would raise up a glorious Person to be a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek, Ps. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 12. and that God's Name should be great among the Gentiles, from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, and that in every Place Incense should be offered to his Name and a pure Offering, Mal. i. 2. which supposes the Law of Moses abrogated, which confined the offering up of Incense to the Sanctuary and Temple. And indeed the very Nature of the Law itself according to which a considerable part of the Ordinances and Rites there prescribed were to be entirely confined to the Land of Canaan, and not to be observed any where

out of that Land, sufficiently shews that it was not originally designed to be of invariable Continuance, nor fitted in the Nature of the Thing for universal and perpetual Obligation.

Again, another Instance produced by this Writer of the Apostle *Paul* contradicting *Moses* is this, “ That *Moses* every where most expressly establishes *Propitiations* and Atonements for Sin by the Blood of Beasts, and declares upon the Action of the Priest in sprinkling the sacrificial Blood, the Atonement should be made, and the Offence forgiven; and ordains daily and annual Sacrifices for the Sins of the whole People, and this without the least hint or intimation of any Type or farther Reference. But St. *Paul* on the contrary declares, it is impossible for the Blood of Bulls or Goats to *take away Sins*; and condemns this literal Sense of the Law as a Scheme of natural Blindness and Bondage that cannot consist either with the civil or religious Rights or Liberties of Mankind.”

That *Moses* establishes *Propitiations* and Atonements for Sin by the Blood of Beasts, will be readily acknowledged; and if this Author could prove that the Apostle *Paul* denies that such Sacrifices had been ever appointed by God at all, this would contradict *Moses*, who prescribes them as of divine Appointment. But on the contrary, it is evident, that the Apostle all along supposes that these Sacrifices had been appointed by God himself thro’ the Ministry of *Moses*. He represents them indeed as now abolished, but this is only to say, that the Mosaic Law is no longer obligatory, and that God hath not thought fit to require those Sacrifices under the New Testament. As to what he adds, “ that *Moses* declares that the Atonement should be made and the Offence forgiven upon the Action of the Priest in sprinkling the sacrificial Blood, without the least hint or intimation

“ of

“ of any Type or farther Reference. Whereas the
“ Apostle declares it is impossible for the Blood of
“ Bulls and Goats to take away Sin :” The Apostle
himself plainly shews us how to reconcile these,
by declaring that the Gifts and Sacrifices under
the Law *sanctified to the purifying of the Flesh* ;
and this external Atonement is what *Moses* intends
as the immediate Consequence of the Priests sprink-
ling the Blood. The Person thereupon was *legally*
clean and free, but he never intended to signify
that merely upon the outward act done of the
Priest's sprinkling the sacrificial Blood, the Man's
Conscience was immediately purged from the Guilt
of Sin, without *Repentance* and new Obedience.
For the Necessity of Repentance and Obedience in
order to Forgiveness and Acceptance with God is
strongly represented in the Law. The Case then
with respect to those Sacrifices stand thus : The
outward Act of offering the Sacrifice, and the
Priests sprinkling the Blood when done as the Law
prescribes, was an external Atonement or Expi-
ation, by which the Person was outwardly and le-
gally cleansed from the Guilt he had contracted.
Besides which to the truly penitent and sincere this
Rite was an outward Sign or Pledge of God's
Pardon and Acceptance. And if the Apostle *Paul*
may be allowed a better Interpreter of the Design
of those Sacrifices than this Writer, one great End
for which they were instituted was to *prefigure* that
of Christ, and by those typical Atonements to pre-
pare them for that great Propitiation of infinite
Virtue which he was to offer for the Sins of the
World. And if this was one primary Intention of
that part of the Mosaic Law, it gives us a more
comprehensive View of the Wisdom of this Con-
stitution. It shews those Sacrifices to have been
originally appointed by God himself, and that the
great End of them is now fulfilled, and conse-
quently that this part of the Law of *Moses* instead

of being contrary to the Gospel, was designed to be subservient to it. As to the Exception he makes that *Moses* himself gives no Intimation of any Type or farther Reference, it shall be consider'd afterwards when I come more particularly to examine what he offers concerning the *mystical* Sense of the Law.

The next Instance he produceth to prove that the Law of *Moses* is contradicted and denied by the Apostle *Paul* is absolutely misrepresented. For it no where appears that *Moses commanded all Idolatry to be exterminated by Fire and Sword, not only in Canaan but all the rest of the World, as far as his People should have it in their Power, of which he was very confident.* And as to the particular Law about the Punishment of Idolaters in the *Jewish Commonwealth*, this, with the Author's pretence that it is inconsistent with the Rights of private Judgment and Liberty of Conscience, shall be consider'd afterwards.

The last Instance he produceth to shew the Contradiction and Inconsistency between the Doctrine of the Apostle *Paul*, and the Law of *Moses*, amounts to no more than this, "that the Levitical Order of Priesthood is now abolished, and that the Apostle *Paul* declares it to be so;" which will be easily granted. But at the same time, it is certain, that even when he argues that the Priesthood is now changed, he still plainly shews that he look'd upon it to have been originally of divine Appointment. And tho' he no where expressly declares in what particular Way the Christian Ministry is to be maintained, yet it is not true, as this Author alledges, that he *leaves the Christian Ministry, to subsist only upon Charity*, if by that he meant that it is a Matter of meer Courtesy; for 'tis certain he insists upon it as a Matter of Right, and declares that the Lord *hath ordained that those that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.*

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The Author might at this rate of arguing have produced most of the particular Constitutions of the Law of *Moses* which are no longer in Force under the Gospel, and from thence have argued a Contradiction and Inconsistency between the Gospel and the Law. But all that follows from it is, That that legal Oeconomy is now abrogated with its peculiar Rites and Injunctions. But it does not follow that therefore our Lord *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles* believed that it was not originally of divine Institution: except it could be proved that God can never give any *occasional* Injunctions, which are to last only for a time; or that all his Laws must be as himself immutable; or that that cannot be fit and proper at one time, or in one circumstance of Things, which is not so in another. The contrary to which this Writer himself acknowledges, p. 207. where having observed "that all wise States and Governments have ever found it necessary to abrogate and alter the old, or to enact new Laws, according to mutable and variable Relations and Circumstances of Persons in Society;" he adds, That "this will equally hold good, when applied to the Laws of God himself. For what God would require at one time under such particular Relations and Circumstances, he would not require at another time, under other Relations, and quite different or contrary Circumstances." From whence it is manifest that his Argument to shew an Inconsistency between the *Law of Moses* and the *Christian Religion* as explained by *St. Paul*, because many things that were required in the one are abrogated by the other, hath nothing in it. It doth not follow, that the Mosaick Oeconomy was not instituted by God, because many of its Rites and Constitutions were abrogated and superseded by a succeeding Dispensation; when the Circumstances of Things were much altered from what they were at the

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the first giving of the Law, and the Design for which that peculiar Oeconomy had been erected was answered and fulfilled.

I shall conclude this Chapter with observing that this Writer in order the better to shew an Inconsistency between the Law of *Moses* and the Gospel, absolutely denies any *mystical* or typical Sense of the Law of *Moses*, or that any of its Rites had in their original Intention any farther Reference than the bare Letter.

He asks, "Whether there can be found any Reason or Foundation in all the Writings of *Moses*, or his Commentators the Prophets, for that typical, figurative and allegorical Sense of the legal Priesthood, Sacrifices, and Ceremonies which St. *Paul* supposes and argues upon in his Reasonings against the *Jews*, in order to set aside this Priesthood, and the Law of Ceremonies depending upon it, as fulfilled and accomplished in Christ?" And observes in the Passage I mentioned before, that "*Moses* establishes Propitiations and Atonements for Sin by the Blood of Beasts, and ordains Sacrifices, without the least Hint or Intimation of any Type or farther Reference," p. 41. And therefore he concludes that "St. *Paul*'s rejecting and renouncing the ceremonial Law in its literal Sense, when *Moses* had delivered and enforced it in no other Sense, was a plain Declaration that such a Law could never be of divine Institution," p. 51. But it is not true that the Apostle *Paul* condemned and renounced the ceremonial Law in its literal Sense, if by that be meant that he supposed its Rites literally taken not to have been instituted by God; for he all along supposes that even literally taken the legal Rites and Ordinances were of divine Appointment, and were imposed upon the *Jews* by a divine Authority to be observed by them until the times of Reformation: That is, till

the last and most perfect Dispensation should be introduced under the *Messiah*. But he argues that beside the literal they had a mystical Sense, and that in instituting them, the divine Wisdom had a farther view, and designed them as *Types* and *Figures* of greater and better Things under that more perfect Dispensation that was to succeed.

And let us see what this Author offers to prove that it was not so. All his long Discourse about the typical mystical Sense of the Law, amounts to no more than this. That, "there is not the least hint in the Writings of *Moses*, or his Commentators the Prophets of any such typical Sense or Reference; that such a mystical Sense of the Law and Prophets was never known nor heard of among the *Jews* till after the Days of *Ezra*, when the *Jewish* Cabalists put what Sense they pleased on those Writings; and when they could not prove the new Doctrines they advanced (amongst which he reckons that of the Resurrection, a general Judgment, and a State of future Rewards and Punishments) "by the original literal Sense of those Writings, they introduced a mystical allegorical Sense of their original Books, and pretended an oral Tradition to justify their arbitrary Interpretations. That the Apostle *Paul* and *Christ* himself argued with the *Jews* in their own way, and upon their own Concessions, and justified the Gospel Scheme upon the Foot of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, not from the proper original Sense of the *Prophets* themselves, but by mystical allegorical Interpretations, for which there was really no Foundation in the Writings themselves of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. And he asks why might not they take up the same Principles against such Men to introduce and establish the true Religion, which they had made use of and applied to establish and perpetuate a false one?" This is the sum of what he saith from p. 43 to 51.

But

But if we should grant that there is no hint of any such mystical typical Sense or Reference in the Law of *Moses* or the *Prophets*, this would not prove that there was no such Sense in the original Intention of the Holy Ghost in giving these Laws. For supposing such an original typical Intention, it might not be proper to declare this in the Law itself, or to let the People directly and expressly know that its Rites were typical, the *Shadows* and Figures of good Things to come under another and more perfect Dispensation. This might have *diminished* their regard to the Law, and have rendered them *negligent* in the Observation of its Injunctions, even when it was proper for good Reasons that they should be kept close to the Observation of them. Types might be originally intended, tho' not then explained and understood when they were first instituted. And there is no Absurdity in supposing, that God whose Wisdom penetrates through all Ages, had some Ends in view in instituting those Rites and Ceremonies, which he did not open *all at once*, but which were to be understood in the *proper Season*; and particularly that he designed them among other Ends, (for it is not pretended that it is the only End) for Types and Figures of good Things to come, with a view that when the time came for accomplishing them, their apt *Correspondency* might more fully appear. And indeed the typical Sense and Reference could not be well understood till the Anti-type came, by comparing it with which, the exact and beautiful Harmony between both, and the Wisdom of God in appointing it so, might be fully manifest. And who so proper in that Case to explain the original Sense intended by the Holy Ghost, as those who were inspired by the same divine Spirit? I shall therefore beg leave to suppose that our Lord *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*, particularly the Apostle *Paul*, are more to be depended

pendent on for a just Account of the original Sense of *Moses* and the Prophets, than this Writer who confidently avers they had no such original typical Sense and Reference, tho' *Christ* and his *Apostles* assure us they had.

But after all, it is not true, that there is not
 " *the least Foundation* in the Writings of *Moses* or
 " his Commentators the *Prophets* for that typical
 " figurative Sense of the legal Priesthood, Sacri-
 " fices and Ceremonies, which St. *Paul* supposes
 " and argues upon in order to set aside this Priest-
 " hood, and the Law of Ceremonies depending
 " upon it, as fulfilled and accomplished in *Christ*."

There are several Hints concerning a Redeemer to come interspersed in the *Mosaical* Writings, and still more in those of the *Prophets*. He had been promised and foretold from the beginning at sundry Times and in diverse Manners. This was the principal thing intended in the Promise made to *Abraham* concerning *all Nations being blessed in his Seed*, and so *Abraham* himself understood it, who if we may believe our Saviour, *saw his Day and was glad*. *Jacob* spoke of him under the Name of *Shiloh*. And the *Israelites* had derived to them from the *Patriarchs* an Expectation of this glorious Person as one that should arise from among them. And this being the Case the most wise and understanding of them might be naturally led to think that there was a farther View and Reference to the great Event, in many of the Rites that were then prescribed, and in that particular Constitution and Polity that was then erected, especially since *Moses* himself directed their Views this way, by telling them of *another Prophet whom God would raise up from the midst of them like unto him*, to whom they were to pay an entire Obedience, and to observe whatsoever Laws or Commands he should bring them from God. The Sacrifices the chief part of the legal Rites and Services are sometimes spoken of in the

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Old Testament, with a seeming Contempt, as things in which God had no Pleasure. It is certain these Expressions were not intended to signify that God had not instituted or required those Sacrifices at all; But it was natural to conclude from those Expressions, that they were not instituted meerly for their own Sakes, but had a farther View and Reference. Thus particularly in the 40th Psalm, *ver. 5, 6.* the Person there spoken of, after having plainly declared the Insufficiency of the legal Sacrifices, adds concerning himself, *Then said I, lo I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will, O God.* Where he represents himself and his coming, as written of in the Law. And this I think can scarce be understood to relate to any but the *Messiah*; of whom *David* often speaks, and of whom the *Apostle* interprets it, *Heb. x. 5—9.* and if so, here is an instance to prove, that at the time when this Psalm was composed, which was in the Days of *David*, many Ages before *Ezra*, the Law was understood, as having a Reference to the *Messiah*. And in that Passage there is also a plain Intimation that the legal Sacrifices were to cease, and to be abolished at the *Messiah's* coming. But especially the liiid Chapter of *Isaiab*, which the most ancient *Jews* interpreted of the *Messiah*, and which indeed cannot reasonably be understood of any other, points to a farther Reference of the legal Sacrifices, to be *fulfilled and accomplished in Christ*. The Prophet there speaks of him in Phrases that properly related to Sacrifices. As he describes the grievous Sufferings he was to endure, so he represents them as having an expiatory Virtue, and making atonement for our Sins. He represents him as *bearing our Iniquities*, and making his Soul an offering for Sin, and that God laid upon him the Iniquities of us all. This ought to have led the *Jews* to look beyond the legal Sacrifices and Oblations, to that great Propitiation of infinite Virtue which

was to be offered for our Sins in the fulness of time, and of which those Sacrifices were only the imperfect Figures and Shadows: And what the Prophet here saith is perfectly agreeable to what *St. Paul* and the other Apostles so often represent concerning our *Lord Jesus Christ*, as offering himself a *Sacrifice for our Sins*, and doing that in reality which the others only did in Type and Figure. Indeed the Prophets in all their Writings have numberless References to the *Messiah*, and there is no explaining many Passages in those Writings without such a Reference. They often speak of things that literally, and in the first Sense relate to their own time in Terms which evidently have a farther view. And that they understood and explained the Prophecies before them as typical of the *Messiah*, and often prophesied by Types themselves, and intimated at the very time of delivering those Prophecies that they were to be referred to him, is largely and fully shewn in the *Bishop of Lichfield's* learned Defence of *Christianity* from the ancient Prophecies, *Ch. 3. Sect. 1, 2, 3, 4.* Whereas therefore this Writer asserts over and over with great Confidence, that what he calls the *figurative spiritualizing Sense* of the Law and the Prophets, was never heard of among the *Jews* before the Days of *Ezra*, and that it had its first rise among the *Jewish Rabbinistical* Doctors after that time: The contrary is rather true, that all along from the Beginning, the Law and the Prophets were understood as containing a spiritual and mystical Sense, and as having a farther View and Reference. When *Moses* urges the People to *circumcise the Fore-skin of their Hearts*, *Levit. x. 16.* and again, speaks of God's *circumcising their Hearts that they might love him with all their Heart and Soul*, *Deut. xxx. 6.* here is a plain instance of a *spiritual Sense* in the Law itself with regard to one of the principal Rites there enjoined, the solemn Rite of Initiation into that peculiar Polity.

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He here plainly directs them to carry their Thoughts beyond the outward Sign, and intimates to them that it had a farther View, even to signify the Necessity of an inward *Purity*, and of mortifying their corrupt Affections and Lusts. And indeed considering the frequent use of Signs and Symbols among the Eastern Nations, especially in the early Ages, which were still supposed to contain some other Significations under them, and to have a farther View than the bare Letter; and considering the high Esteem they had of the great Wisdom of the *Law* and the *Mosaick* Institutions, every thing in which even the most minute Rites were regarded as prescribed by God himself; and considering that an Expectation of the *Messiah*, and of a more new and glorious State of things under him, was still kept up among them; it was natural for them to think that there was a farther View and Reference in that great Variety of legal Rites, and Sacrifices, and Ceremonies, beyond what appeared in the bare Letter. And it was because it had been all along a known and acknowledged Principle in their Nation, that many things in the *Law* and the *Prophecy* had a farther View, that the *Jewish Doctors*, after the time of *Ezra*, when immediate Inspiration ceased, and there were no longer any extraordinary Prophets among them, took occasion to introduce their *traditionary* Explications. And it is probable some of these Explications were agreeable to the true original Sense derived from the Prophets themselves, as Dr. *Prideaux* supposes, to whom this Writer is pleased to refer us. Though in process of Time they added many Inventions, and arbitrary Explications of their own, which never were originally intended. They supposed all along a frequent Reference to the *Messiah* in the *Mosaical* and *Prophe- tical* Writings, and so far they were right in general, and undoubtedly they were so in the Sense they give of many particular Passages. Some consider-

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table Remains there are of those Explications in the most ancient and approved *Jewish* Writings; tho' the *modern* Jews would fain give a different Turn to them to avoid the force of the Arguments the Christians bring against them from these Interpretations that were admitted by their Ancestors. It also appears from some Passages in their approved Writings, that they expected their own Law to be more fully opened to them at the *Messiah's* coming, and the Reason of several of their own Rites explained. See the abovementioned *Defence of Christianity*, p. 409, 410.

Upon the whole, tho' this Writer represents it, p. 19. as a very ridiculous Thing to suppose that what was more obscurely hinted in the Law and the Prophets is more clearly revealed in the Gospel, and speaks in a gibing manner of *those Men of deep Penetration and Discernment* that can see this sort of Connection and Harmony between the Gospel and the Law, and to whom it appears just and beautiful, p. 19. I can see nothing in it but what is worthy of the Wisdom of God, that he should at different Times and in different Circumstances of things, make gradual Discoveries of his Will; and that he should so order former Revelations as to prepare the way for the latter, and the latter, so as to illustrate and confirm the former; and that what is more darkly and imperfectly hinted at in the one, should be more clearly and fully delivered in the other. Considered in this View and mutual Reference, I must own that both the Old Testament and the New appear to me with a brighter Glory, and derive mutual Light and Strength to one another. And the gradual opening and unfolding of the divine Light in so many various views, has yielded great Satisfaction in the Contemplation of it to Men that truly deserved the Character of Persons of *deep Discernment and Penetration*, with which this Writer sheeringly honours them. As God's sending his

own Son into the World for the Redemption of Mankind was the most important Event that ever was ; so to consider it as having been all along prefigured and foretold at *sundry Times* and in *diverse Manners*, sometimes more clearly and openly signified by express Predictions, sometimes more covertly by various Types and Figures, so many things pointing this way through so long a Succession of Ages, and all centring here ; gives a noble and comprehensive view of this grand Design, and shews one and the same important Scheme still uniformly carrying on, one wise presiding Spirit and glorious divine Author, whose views extend through all Ages. This is truly glorious and worthy of the supreme Wisdom, and it is not an odd turn of Expression, calling *literal Christianity mystical Judaism*, and *literal Judaism figurative Christianity*, and a jingle of the like Phrases which the Author makes use of to ridicule it, that will shew the Absurdity of such a Scheme as this. And it is certain that what he ridicules is the very Scheme advanced by our Saviour himself and his *Apostles*, particularly the Apostle *Paul*. He pretends indeed to apologize for them by alledging, that in this they only made use of the false way of arguing that had obtained amongst the *Jews* ; that is, he would have it thought, first that they acknowledged and asserted the divine Authority and Inspiration of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, though at the same time they believed them to be only *false* pretenders to Inspiration ; and then that they set up a Sense of their Writings which they themselves very well know was not their Sense, and endeavoured to put that false Sense upon the *Jews* for the mind of the *Holy Ghost*. A Conduct which is too inconsistent with common Honesty and Integrity, and with the known Character of *Christ* and his *Apostles* to be admitted.

I shall only farther observe, to shew the great Consistency of this Writer ; that tho' in this part of

his Book he so confidently asserts and endeavours in many Words to prove, that the Prophetical and Mosaical Writings were never understood to have any mystical Sense till after the Days of *Ezra*, when it had its first rise among the *Jewish Cabalists*; yet he elsewhere expressly declares that *Moses* and the *Prophets* always writ *with a double Intention*, and had a double Sense; the one literal and popular, the other to be understood only by the wiser Sort. And he blames the *Jewish Nation* for understanding the Writings of *Moses* and the *Prophets* according to the *Letter*, without entring into the *Spirit* and Design of them, as he saith, *St. Paul hath evidently and irrefutably proved*, p. 249, 251. It is true, he very absurdly applies this to the historical Narrations of Facts which he would not have to be understood literally: But it is certain the Apostle *Paul*, who he there pretends to believe hath evidently and irrefutably proved the mystical Sense of the Law and the *Prophets*, and hath shewn that the *Jews* did not enter into the true Spirit and Design of them, understood this not with regard to the *historical* Facts and Narrations, but to the legal *Rites* and Ordinances, and shews they had a typical Reference and a farther View. So that if he will be concluded by the Judgment of that great Apostle in this matter, as he pretends to be willing to be, there was such a Sense *originally* intended in the legal Priesthood and Sacrifices. And what then must we think of this Author, who contradicts and denies what by his own Confession *St. Paul hath evidently and irrefutably proved*?

As to the Proof he brings to shew that the mystical and spiritual Sense of the Law and the *Prophets* was never heard of before *Ezra*, because before that Period “no *Jewish* Writer, Priest or Prophet, had ever mentioned a Word of the *Resurrection*, general *Judgment*, and State of *future* Rewards and Punishments, as the proper Sanctions of Vir-

“ true and Religion in this Life, whereas all the
 “ *Jewish* Writings afterwards are full of them,
 “ p. 46.” This is intirely misrepresented ; as I
 shall shew when I come to consider what he offers
 to prove, that all the *Jews* were *Deistical Materialists* and *Sadducees*, and did not believe a future
 State, till after their Return from the *Babylonish*
 Captivity.

C H A P. IV.

The Author's Objections against the Law of Moses from the internal Constitution of that Law considered. His pretence that that Law extended only to the outward Practice and Behaviour of Men in Society, and that the Obligation of it with respect to civil and social Virtue extended no farther than to the Members of that Society, and that they were put into a State of War with all the rest of the World. It is shewn that that Law required an inward Purity of Heart and Affections. The great Tenderness and Humanity that appears in its Precepts. It required a kind and benevolent Conduct not only towards those of their own Society, but towards Strangers. That Constitution not founded in the Principles of Persecution. It tolerated all that worshipped the one true God, tho' not conforming to their peculiar Rites and Usages. The punishing Idolatry with Death in the Commonwealth of Israel accounted for. No Obligation by that Law to extirpate Idolatry, and destroy Idolaters in all other Countries by Fire and Sword. His pretence that Moses directed the Israelites to extend their Conquests through all Nations, and that their Constitution and Plan of a Government was contrived for it, examined. The contrary to this shewn. The military Laws, Deut. xx. explained. Whether that Law absolutely prohibited all Alliances with Idolaters.

HAVING considered the Author's Objections against the Law of Moses drawn from the Authority

Authority of *St. Paul*, and from the pretended Inconsistency between it and the Gospel, I shall now proceed to consider those Objections of his that are taken from the *internal Constitution* of that Law, which he every where supposes to be altogether unworthy of God, and therefore impossible to be given by him. If his account be true it was one of the worst, the most absurd, and tyrannical Constitutions in the World; *a wretched Scheme of Superstition, Blindness, and Slavery, Bigotry, and Enthusiasm, that had nothing of Truth or Goodness in it, and was contrary to all Reason and common Sense.* These and other hard *Epithets* of the like kind he liberally bestows upon the Law of *Moses*. Let us consider what he offers to support such severe *Invectives*.

And first, one of his Objections against even the *Moral Law* given by *Moses* to the People of *Israel*, is, that as the Law was constituted; “ All its
“ Sanctions being merely temporal, relating only
“ to Mens outward Practice and Behaviour in Society, and none of its Rewards or Punishments
“ relating to any future State; it could only relate
“ to outward Actions, and thereby secure civil Virtue, and the civil Rites and Properties of the Society, against such Fraud or Violence, as might
“ fall under a human Cognizance; but could not
“ relate to the inward Principles and Motives of
“ Action, whether good or bad; and therefore
“ could not purify the Conscience, regulate the
“ Affections, or correct and restrain the vicious
“ Desires, Inclinations, and Dispositions of the
“ Mind, and this is what *St. Paul* means, as often
“ as he declares the Weakness or Insufficiency of
“ this Law, to inforce or secure a State of inward
“ Zeal, Virtue, or Righteousness, with respect to
“ God and Conscience, *p. 27.*”

But it is capable of as clear a Proof as any thing whatsoever, (and our Author himself is sensible

sible of it, as is evident from what he makes *Theophanes* his Christian Jew object against *Philalettes* his Moral Philosopher on this Head, p. 33, &c.) that the Law of *Moses* did not relate to the outward Actions alone, but to the inward Principles and Motives of Action: and that *Moses* not only always supposed, as he grants, an inward right Motive, or the Principle and Disposition of Love to God and our Neighbour, as necessary to constitute the true Morality and Religion of an Action with respect to God and Conscience: but that he directly and expressly, frequently, and in the strongest manner requires a right Disposition of the Heart and Mind; and that this Law was designed, contrary to what this Author asserts, to regulate the Affections, and to correct and restrain the vicious Desires, Inclinations and Dispositions of the Mind. This is the evident Intention of the tenth Commandment, which forbids not only outward evil Actions, but the inward irregular Affections and Motions of Concupiscence. This St. Paul takes Notice of when he declares, that he should not have been sensible that such Desires were sinful, or that they deserved Death, if the Law had not forbidden them, *Rom. vii. 7.* and again, *ver. 14.* he saith, *the Law is spiritual*, by which he evidently means that it extends to the inward Dispositions of the Soul and Spirit as well as to the outward Actions, and forbids and condemns all evil Thoughts and Inclinations. And the Supposition of this vast extent and spirituality of the Law lies at the Foundation of his Argument, that none can be justified by it; because none can be found that yield a perfect Obedience to its pure and excellent Precepts. This Writer therefore plainly misrepresents St. Paul's Sense, when after having said, that the Law could only relate to outward Actions, and thereby secure civil Virtue, but did not relate to the inward Principles or Motives of Action whether

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good or bad, and therefore could not regulate the Affections, restrain the vicious Desires and Inclinations of the Minds, he adds, that is what St. Paul means as often as he declares the *Weakness or Insufficiency of this Law, to enforce or secure a State of inward real Virtue or Righteousness with respect to God and Conscience.* p. 27. For the Apostle by saying the Law (if taken of the moral Law) is *weak*, doth not mean as this Writer insinuates, that its Precepts relate only to the outward Practice, and not to the inward Dispositions of the Heart and Soul; for he expressly affirms that it is *spiritual*, and doth relate to the inward Desires and Affections: but he intends to shew that the Law was in itself unable to justify Men, or intitle them to Pardon and Acceptance with God, and give them a Right to eternal Life (which is what he means by Justification) because it could only justify those that obeyed its Precepts, and no Man doth perfectly obey it. So that it is *weak*, as he expresses it *through the Flesh*; that is, it is unable to justify Men because of the present Weakness and Corruption of Human Nature; whereby it comes to pass that in many Instances they fall short of the pure and perfect Obedience there required, and therefore their Acceptance and Justification must be wholly owing to the free *Grace and Mercy of God*, which is most clearly and gloriously dispensed and manifested through *Jesus Christ* in the Gospel Dispensation.

The Passages this Writer himself in the Person of *Theophanes* refers to, clearly prove, that the Law of *Moses* relates not merely to the outward Actions, or external Behaviour of Persons in Society, but to the inward Dispositions of the Heart, *Deut. xii. 1, 5. Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might.* This excellent and comprehensive Com-

mand, which takes in the Sum of real vital Religion and Piety is often repeated in the Law, see *Deut. x. 12. xi. 13.* The other Passage he cites is from *Lev. xix. 17, 18. Thou shalt not avenge or bear any Grudge against the Children of thy People, but thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self: I am the Lord.* Where they are not only forbidden to avenge themselves, but even to entertain a secret Grudge against their Neighbours, and are commanded to love them as themselves. And this is enforced by this Consideration, *I am the Lord*, who search the Hearts, and know your inward Disposition, and will reward and punish you accordingly. And indeed, as God himself in that Polity, and under that peculiar Form of Government, was regarded as in a special and immediate manner their King and Judge, who perfectly knew their Hearts and most secret Dispositions, so they were taught by *Moses* still to have a regard to God in their Obedience, and, to expect Rewards and Punishments from him, not merely according to their outward Actions, but the inward Dispositions of their Minds. And as to their outward Actions, in this as well as other Laws they fell under the Jurisdiction of the *Magistrate*. There were open Punishments to be inflicted for publick notorious Offences, and evil Practices against the good of the Society.

Many Instances might be produced besides those now referred to, which plainly shew, that the Law of *Moses* reached not merely like the Laws of other Nations to Men's outward Actions and Behaviour in Society, but was designed to govern and regulate their inward Affections and Dispositions of Soul. Thus *Lev. xix. 17.* in the Words immediately preceding those last cited, it is said, *Thou shalt not bate thy Brother in thine Heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour; and not suffer Sin upon him.* A most remarkable Passage,

the like of which Precept can scarce be found in any other Law: It is there reckoned a *bating* our Brother in *our Heart*, if we have not such a regard for him as to put us upon tender affectionate Admonitions, when we see him ingaged in any wrong Practice. In the Precepts given the People concerning their distributing to the Necessities of their poor and indigent Neighbours, they are not only commanded to give, but to give from a charitable Disposition, not to *be grieved when they give*, Deut. xv. 10. They are commanded not only to observe God's Statutes and Judgments, but to *keep them with all their Heart, and with all their Soul*, and that as they expect that God would bless and favour them, see Deut. xi. 13—18. xxvii. 16. The Repentance required of them is expressed by *turning to the Lord their God with all their Heart, and with all their Soul*, Deut. xxx. 10. iv. 29. and they are required to *circumcise the Fore-skin of their Heart*, Deut. x. 16. which is explained, Deut. xxx. 6. by their loving God *with all their Heart, and with all their Soul*, that they may *live*. Nothing can be plainer from all these Passages, to which many more might easily be added, than that the Law of *Moses* insists upon the Necessity of real inward Religion, and right Affections and Dispositions of Heart. And to such an Obedience as this it is that Life and Happiness is there promised. And we may therefore conclude, that under the Life there promised, a Promise of Future Happiness is couched and included, though not directly expressed. The Author's Argument in this Case may be turned against him, he argues that because the Law had only the Sanctions of *temporal Prosperity and Adversity*; therefore it could only relate to outward Actions, and not to the inward Principles and Motives of Action, p. 27. On the contrary, it may reasonably be concluded, that because the Law evidently reached unto, and was

was designed to regulate the inward Principles and Dispositions of the Heart, and indispensably required inward vital Religion and Godliness, therefore the Promises, at least, the general Ones of the *Lord's being their God, &c.* were understood to extend farther than merely to outward temporal Prosperity and Adversity; and that under and together with the Promise of temporal Blessings, those of a spiritual and eternal Nature were signified, tho' not directly expressed. And I shall afterwards shew that good Men under that Dispensation all along had a view to the *future Happiness*, as the Reward of true Religion and Righteousness; and took the Promises of temporal Blessings not exclusively of, but as additional to, or as the Types and Pledges of the Spiritual and eternal Rewards of another World, which were all along believed among that People.

But this Writer farther Objects, That "as this Law could only reach the outward Practice and Behaviour of Men in Society, so it was very defective even in that, as providing no sufficient Remedy against any such Immoralities, Excesses, and Debaucheries, in which a Man might only make a Fool or a Beast of himself, without directly hurting his Neighbour or injuring the Society," p. 27. What he means by these *Excesses* and *Debaucheries* I do not well know. *Adultery* and *Fornication* are strongly and expressly forbidden in the Law. And as to *Drunkenness* and *Intemperance* which he seems to have particularly in view, I think that Passage, *Deut. xxix. 19, 20.* fairly and strongly implies a Prohibition and Condemnation of it. Where it is said concerning the Man that *blesseth himself in his Heart, saying, I shall have Peace, though I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, and that the Lord will not spare him, but the Anger of the Lord, and his Jealousy shall smoke against that Man,*

and

and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him, &c. so Deut. xxi. 20. When the Parents are ordered to bring a rebellious Son to be punished; *Drunkennes* and *Gluttony* are particularly mentioned, as the Crimes whereof he is accused before the Magistrates; they shall say unto the Elders of his City, *this our Son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our Voice, he is a Glutton and a Drunkard*: this is here represented as one of the worst Characters; and then it is added, ver. 21. *And all the Men of his City shall stone him with Stones that he die.* When the Priests are most strictly commanded to drink *neither Wine nor strong Drink lest they should die, when they went into the Tabernacle*, that they might put Difference between *holy and unholy, between clean and unclean*; and that they might teach the Children of Israel all the Statutes which the Lord had commanded, Lev. x. 9, 10, 11. Tho' the Prohibition taken in its utmost rigour as it extended to a total Abstinence from all Wine and strong Drink, only obliged them whilst they were actually ministering in the Sanctuary; yet the Reason of the Command sufficiently intimated the Necessity of a constant Sobriety and Temperance in their whole Conversation, that this was what God expected and required of all, and that Drunkenness was what he highly condemned and disapproved. The same might be gathered from that particular Constitution concerning the *Nazarites*, who being peculiarly devoted to God, were to *separate themselves from Wine and Strong Drink* during the time of their Vow, Numb. vii. 3. Which was designed to let the People know how pleasing Sobriety and Temperance was to God, and that as they were all to be a *peculiar People, holy unto the Lord*, so they should carefully avoid all Intemperance and Excess.

But what this Writer seems to lay the principal Stress upon is, " That the Obligation of the Law
" with

" with respect to civil or social Virtue, extended
 " no farther than to the Members of that Society;
 " that is, to those who were of the natural Seed of
 " *Abraham*, or such as by Profelytism were in-
 " corporated with them, and allowed to live among
 " them; but tho' they were obliged to live in
 " Peace and Amity with one another, or within
 " themselves, yet they were put into a State of
 " War with all the rest of the World. They were
 " not only left at Liberty, but encouraged and
 " directed by *Moses* himself to extend their Con-
 " quests as far as they could, and to destroy by
 " Fire and Sword, any or every Nation or Peo-
 " ple that resisted them, and would not submit to
 " become their Subjects and Tributaries upon De-
 " mand." And after mentioning their being com-
 " manded to extirpate the Inhabitants of *Canaan*,
 he adds, that " with regard to their farther Con-
 " quest of other Nations, for which they were
 " designed, and for which their Plan of Govern-
 " ment was contrived, their Commission from
 " *Moses* was, to offer them Terms of Peace, in
 " which their Lives were to be spared upon Con-
 " dition of becoming Subjects and Tributaries to
 " them; and in case of refusal, they were to de-
 " stroy all the Males, and to take the Women
 " Captives, and seize upon all. Their Wealth,
 " and proper Goods, and Cattle, as lawful Plun-
 " der, *Deut. xx. 10—18*. And that thus it is
 " evident, that the People of *Israel* upon the very
 " Constitution and fundamental Principles of *Moses*,
 " were not to maintain any Peace or Amity with
 " any other Nation or People, but on Condition
 " of submitting unto them, as their Subjects,
 " Slaves, and Tributaries, under such Terms as
 " they should think fit to impose," p. 28, 29.
 and again p. 42. he saith, that " *Moses* command-
 " all Idolatry to be exterminated by Fire and
 " Sword, not only in *Canaan*, but in all the rest

“ of the World, so far as his People should have
“ it in their Power.” And *p.* 359. That “ the
“ *Jewish* State, or the Religion of *Moses* was
“ founded in the Principles of Persecution, in which
“ Idolatry was to be exterminated, and Idolaters
“ to be destroyed by Fire and Sword; and he
“ there observes that the Profelytes of the Gate,
“ that were not obliged to be circumcised, or to
“ submit to the ceremonial Law, yet were obliged
“ absolutely to separate themselves from all Ido-
“ lators, or People of other Religions; which se-
“ paration was to regard all family intercourse of
“ eating and drinking together, and even Alli-
“ ance in War, or any other Conjunction of In-
“ terest, tho’ it should appear ever so necessary for
“ mutual Defence, and Self-Preservation. He adds,
“ that this strict and rigid Separation from all the
“ rest of the World, and abjuring their Friend-
“ ship or Alliances as Idolaters, is so closely in-
“ terwoven with all the Laws of *Moses*, that it
“ may be called the fundamental Constitution of
“ that State or Body Politick. This *Jewish* Law-
“ giver thought that it would be impossible to keep
“ Idolatry and false Religion out of the Society,
“ but by punishing it with Death; and that true
“ Religion might be promoted and secured by
“ Force, *p.* 360. and again, *p.* 373. That this
“ was the Nature and Genius of the *Jewish* Reli-
“ gion, in which the Knowledge and Worship of
“ the only true God was to be promoted and
“ secured by Force and Persecution, and by root-
“ ing out Idolatry, and destroying Idolaters by Fire
“ and Sword.

I have put these several Passages together that
we may collect the Author’s Sentiments on this
Head, in one View, and in their full Force.

As to the first Thing he observes “ That the
“ Obligations of the Law with respect to civil or
“ social Virtue, extended no farther than to the

“ Members

“ Members of that Society, and that tho’ they
 “ were obliged to live in Amity with one another,
 “ yet they were put into a State of War with all
 “ the rest of the World :” This is a very *unfair*
 Representation. It must be considered indeed, that
 the Law of *Moses* tho’ of divine Institution and
 Authority, never was intended to be an *universal*
 Law obligatory on all Mankind, but was pecu-
 liarly designed for that one Nation, to whom it
 was immediately directed and published ; and it
 was in the Nature of a special Covenant between
 God and them. It must be expected therefore that
 directly, and in the first place it should prescribe
 how the *Members* of that Society should behave
 among themselves ; and if it prescribed a just, a
 friendly, and a benevolent Conduct in Society, this
 must be owned to be highly laudable. And in
 this respect the Laws of *Moses* are admirable, and
 wonderfully fitted to engage those to whom it was
 given to all the Offices of Kindness, and brotherly
 Affection towards one another. The Obligation it
 lays upon them not to *oppress the Poor*, not to de-
 stitute from the poor Debtor his *Pledge*, if it was
 any thing that was the necessary Means of his Sub-
 sistence, or maintaining his Family : The Com-
 mands given them to lay aside all *Enmity* and Re-
 venge, and not to bear a secret *Grudge* against their
 Neighbour, nor refuse *Assistance* even unto their
 Enemies, but to be ready to do them kind Offices,
Exod. xxii. 25—27. xxiii. 4, 5. Deut. xxiv. 10, 13.
 The *Kindness* and *Equity* with which they were
 obliged to treat their Servants, to which they are
 often urged by this Consideration, that they *them-*
selves had been Servants and Bondmen in the Land
of Egypt, Exod. xxi. 26, 27. Deut. v. 15. xv.
12—15. xvi. 11, 12. xxiii. 15, 16. xxiv. 14, 15.
 the many Precepts obliging them to *pity* and assist
 the Poor and Distressed, and to treat them not with
 haughty Contempt and Disdain, but with all
 Kindness

Kindness and Tenderness, and to give to them liberally and without grudging, *Lev. xxv. 35. Deut. xv. 7—11.* The Injunctions laid upon them not to take *Advantage* of any Person's bodily Weakness and Infirmities for abusing them, not to lay a *Stumbling Block* before the Blind, nor to *curse* the Deaf, *Lev. xix. 14. Deut. xxvii. 18.* These and other Precepts of the like Nature shew such an Equity, such a Spirit of Tenderness and Humanity in the Law of *Moses*, as can scarce be paralleld in any Laws that were given to any other Nation.

Nor was this to be confined merely to those of their own Nation or Society. They are very frequently commanded to shew Kindness to *Strangers*, and not only not to vex and oppress them, but to deal kindly and tenderly towards them. The *Jews* themselves observe that the Precepts prescribing a just and kind Conduct to Strangers are inculcated one and twenty times in their Law. They are commanded to *love the Strangers as themselves*, *Lev. xix. 34.* And to love them not merely as they were incorporated into the same Society with themselves, as this Author represents it, but to love and do good to them considered as *Strangers*, and under that Denomination. This is urged upon them in a pathetic Manner, both by Arguments drawn from the Example of the merciful God himself, *who loveth the Stranger*; and because they themselves had *been Strangers*, and *knew the Heart of Strangers*, *Deut. x. 17, 18, 19.* The Strangers are often joined with the *Poor, the Widow*, and the *Orphan*, yea, and with the *Levites*, as Persons that should in a particular Manner be pitied and assisted; and whom it was a very great Wickedness to *vex* or *oppress*, *Deut. xxiv. 19. Lev. xxv. 6. Numb. xxvi. 11.* The *Gleanings* of the Fields were to be left for them as well as the other Poor, *Lev. xix. 10, xxiii. 22. Deut. xxiv. 20, 21, 22.* And

And agreeable to these Declarations of the Law, to deal by *Oppression with the Stranger*, and to *oppress the Stranger wrongfully*, is represented as a Crime and Wickedness of a very heinous Nature, and those that are guilty of it are reckoned amongst the worst of Sinners, *Ezek. xxii. 7, 29. Mal. iii. 5.* I add as a Proof of the great Humanity of *Moses's* Laws, that one Design for which the *Sabbath* was instituted is there represented to be, that their *Men Servants and Maid Servants*, and the *Stranger* might *rest and be refreshed*, *Exod. xxiii. 12. Deut. v. 14, 15.* Nor does it appear that their Kindness was to be confined to Strangers of any one Party or Religion. It is true, they were not to suffer Strangers to dwell among them that openly professed Idolatry, because this was (as I shall shew) a Subversion of their peculiar Constitution. But in every other Case they were to allow Strangers of all Nations to live among them, and were obliged by their Law to treat them with great Kindness and Humanity. So that this Constitution was not on so narrow a Foundation as the Author represents it. They were not to confine their Kindness to those of their own Nation or Religion, but to extend it to all that worshipped the one true God, tho' they did not live by their Laws, nor observe their Customs: and were far from exacting a rigid Uniformity of Sentiments or Practice.

This Writer indeed, to make the Mosaical Constitution seem narrower, thinks fit to represent it thus, that their Kindness *was to extend no farther than to the Members of their own Society*, that is, *those who were of the natural Seed of Abraham*, or such as by *Profelytism* were incorporated with them. But it is far from being true, that their Kindness was to be confined to those who were incorporated with them, and made Members of that particular Society. This Writer himself elsewhere acknowledgeth, "that under that Constitution there was

" room

“ room left for all Nations to be *profelyted* or *naturalized*, without being circumcised or submitting to the ceremonial Law,” p. 359. Here indeed he shews his Ignorance of the *Jewish* Constitutions, or else wilfully misrepresents it, when he makes their being *profelyted* and their being *naturalized* to be the same thing ; and in several other Parts of his Book he calls *profelytism* *naturalization*, as if they were synonymous Terms. But tho’ the Profelytes of *Justice*, who were circumcised and obliged to observe the ceremonial Law, might he properly said to be naturalized, and incorporated with them, and to become Members of that Society : The Profelytes of the *Gate* of whom he there speaks, could not be said to be so, nor were ever regarded by the *Jews* as incorporated with them, or Members of their Society. They still regarded them as *Gentiles*, and were wont to call them *the pious among the Gentiles*. And yet all such Persons of whatsoever Nation were allowed to live amongst them, and the Law of *Moses* obliged the *Israelites* to treat them with great Humanity and Benevolence, tho’ they were not circumcised, and did not submit to the ceremonial Law. Nor were they ever warranted by that Law to inforce the Observation of it by Fire and Sword, or to use any Methods of Violence in order to profelyte those of any other Nation to their Religion, or to persecute them if they refused to conform to their peculiar Rites. There is not any one Precept in the whole Law to this Purpose. It is therefore a very wrong Account that he gives of the *Jewish* State or Religion of *Moses*, when he represents it as founded in the Principles of Persecution, and as absolutely inconsistent with Toleration, Indulgence, and Liberty of Conscience, or the Rights of private Judgment.

It is true, that under that Constitution, if any among the *Israelites* openly served other Gods, and

endeavoured to seduce others to do so, they were to be put to death; and if a Town or City fell off to the open Practice of *Idolatry*, the Ringleaders were to be enquired after and punished with Death; and if the Town persisted in it after due Enquiry and Admonition, it was to be destroyed. But if we consider the peculiar Nature of that Constitution, this may be easily accounted for. One great Design for which that Polity was erected, was to establish the Worship of the one true God in opposition to *Idolatry*. This was not only the chief Principle of their *Religion*, but the principal Maxim of their *State*. For they were properly a Community or Body of People formed into a sacred Polity under God, not only as the great *Governour* of the World as he is to the rest of Mankind, but as in a special Sense their *King* and Governour, who had been pleased to enter into a peculiar Relation to them to this Purpose, whom they had by solemn Covenant acknowledged and recognized as such, and to whom they had promised and vowed Obedience. This was the Fundamental of their Polity, the *original Contract* upon which their State was founded. Their Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, and all the Advantages and Privileges promised them, absolutely depended by Covenant upon their persevering in the Worship of the true God. So that *Idolatry* or the worshipping of other Gods besides the common Guilt inseparable from it, as it is a very criminal Breach of the Law of Nature, was in that Constitution an act of Rebellion against their rightful acknowledged Sovereign, and a dissolving the original fundamental Contract that lay at the Foundation of their whole Constitution, and by which it subsisted. And in this View of Things those that were guilty of *Idolatry* were to be regarded as in the worst Sense Traitors and Enemies to their Country, engaged in a Design to subvert their fundamental Constitution, and that original

Covenant

Covenant on which their Preservation as a Community, and their Right to all their Privileges, and to their Country itself depended. And therefore in such a Circumstance of Things, and in a State so constituted, it was far from being cruel or unjust, or contrary to the Liberties of Mankind, or the Rights of Conscience, to punish Idolaters with Death ; any more than it is in other Countries and States to punish High *Treason* with Death, or a Conspiracy to subvert the State. And to have tolerated Idolatry in such a Constitution, would have been as great an Absurdity, as it would have been in any other State to tolerate the open avowed Enemies of the State, and those who manifestly endeavour to subvert it.

Nor does it follow that therefore *Idolaters* are now to be punished with Death in Christian States and Commonwealths, because that particular Law and Constitution enjoining it is now no longer in Force. 'Tis true this Writer urges, that " where-
" as it has been commonly said, that the *Jewish*
" Religion and Government was a *Theocracy*, and
" that no Consequence can be drawn from it, to
" any other meer human Forms of Government ;
" this must be a great Mistake. For it can scarce-
" ly be doubted, that if God was to form any
" Scheme or Model of Government, it would be
" in all Respects the fittest, wisest, and best that
" could be pitched upon, and worthy to be imi-
" tated under every other State and Constitution.
" To deny this would be to deny God's Righte-
" ousness and superior Wisdom. And therefore
" he hopes the Patrons of the old Scheme of the
" *Jewish* Law and Religion, and they who would
" now found *Christianity* upon *Judaism*, will con-
" sider what they are about before they go much
" further," p. 373.

It will be easily owned that a Scheme and Model of Government of God's own Appointment must

must be the fittest and wisest, and most worthy to be imitated in the *like* Circumstances and State of Things; and consequently it will be owned that in such a Polity so circumstanced and constituted, and of such a peculiar Nature as the *Jewish* was, the Constitutions of that Commonwealth which were of divine Appointment would be worthy to be imitated. But it does not follow that what God himself, who is certainly the best Judge, thought fittest and properest in one Circumstance or State of Things, ought to be followed and imitated in *every* other State and Circumstance of Things; or that the Laws and Constitutions he gave as peculiarly adapted to such a Constitution, should be imitated by others, where that Constitution with the peculiar Reasons on which it was founded no longer subsists. And this Author himself must acknowledge this, since he expressly saith, *p.* 207. That “ what God would require at one time under
“ such particular Relations and Circumstances,
“ he would not require at another time under
“ other Relations, and quite different or contrary
“ Circumstances.”

But tho’ *Idolatry* for the Reasons now mentioned was punished with Death in the Land of *Israel*, yet it is far from being true, tho’ this Author repeats it over and over with great Confidence, that they were obliged by the Law to *extirpate Idolatry, and destroy Idolaters in all Nations with Fire and Sword*. No such thing appears in the Law of *Moses*. The Commands there given to destroy Idolaters manifestly relate to those among themselves, and in their own Land that should worship other Gods; as is evident from *Deut.* xiiith Chapter. And when they are commanded to destroy all the Monuments of Idolatry, that also plainly relates to the Land of *Canaan*, as appears from all the Passages where this is required, *Exod.* xxiii.

23, 24. xxxiv. 11, 13. *Numb.* xxxiii. 52. *Deut.*

vii. 5—25. xii. 1, 21. See also *Judg. ii. 2.* and there is not one Precept in the whole Law directing and encouraging them to extirpate Idolatry, and to destroy Idolaters in other Countries by Fire and Sword. Nor do we read of any War ever undertaken by any of the Kings of *Judab* or *Israel* beyond the Bounds of *Palæstine*, meerly to extirpate Idolatry and to destroy Idolaters. *David* was the most victorious Prince they ever had, and was exceedingly zealous against Idolatry, and yet it doth not appear that any one of his Wars was undertaken meerly for the Sake of exterminating Idolatry; nor is it ever taken notice of that he destroyed the Monuments of Idolatry in those Countries which he subdued, but only that they became tributary to him, and brought him Gifts.

It is hard to conceive upon what Grounds this Writer could assert as he does, that *Moses* was very confident that his People should have it in their Power to extend their conquering Arms, not only in *Canaan* but all the rest of the World. He often indeed expresses his Confidence that they should conquer *Canaan* and destroy the Nations there, whom God had devoted to Destruction; but he never once intimates any Confidence that he had concerning their obtaining an universal Empire. There is not the least Hint in all the Mosaick Writings that ever he believed or expected any such thing, but a great deal to the contrary. He most clearly and expressly foretels their many Calamities and Dispensations; that they should be scattered through all Nations, not as Lords and Conquerors, but as Captives, and under the Power of their Enemies, see *Levit. xxvi.* and *Deut. xxviii.* and his admirable Song, *Deut. xxxii.* This Author himself tells us, “ That nothing has since happened to the *Jews*, but what *Moses* himself had foretold. He knew from what he had seen and experienced of them, that after his Death they would forsake God, forfeit
“ all

“ all the Favour and Protection of his Providence,
 “ and be finally destroyed and dissolved as a Peo-
 “ ple. And he left it upon Record against them,
 “ and caused his last dying Words to be written
 “ and prescribed in the Book of the Law, *p.* 327,
 “ 328.” Though the account he gives of what
Moses had experienced of them will by no means ac-
 count for the clear and admirable Predictions he ut-
 ters concerning the Fate of that People in succeed-
 ing Ages, and the surprizing Revolutions that be-
 fel them ; yet it appears from the Author’s own
 Confession, that *Moses* did not believe and expect
 that they would extend their Conquests through all
 Nations, and subdue them by Fire and Sword, of
 which yet this same Writer tells us *Moses was very*
confident. Nor is it true that he *encouraged* and *di-*
rected them to extend their Conquests, or that *their*
Constitution and Plan of Government was designed and
contrived for it. So far from this, that rather the
 whole Frame of their Government was so contrived
 as to discountage and hinder them from an ambition
 of enlarging their Empire. *Moses* could not more
 effectually hinder it, than by binding them to the
 Observance of such Laws and Constitutions, as ren-
 dered it in a great Measure extremely difficult, if
 impracticable, to make and maintain large Con-
 quests abroad. The utmost extent of Dominion
 that is ever mentioned as what should any way, or
 at any time belong unto them, and which they ac-
 tually possessed in the Reign of *David* and *Solomon*,
 was but of a small extent compared with the rest of
 the World, even as known in *Moses*’s time, viz.
 From the River of *Egypt* to *Euphrates*, *Gen.* xv. 18.
 but the Land that was particularly given them for
 a Possession was very small, and *Moses* describes it
 with great Exactness, and the Bounds of it, *Numb.*
xxxiv. 1—13. Their being divided into several
Tribes, each of which were kept distinct, and had
 their several Lots particularly assigned them in the
 Land

Land of *Canaan*; and their being forbidden ever to *alienate* their Inheritances there; their having their Cities of *Refuge* assigned to them only within the Limits of that Land; their being obliged to offer all their Sacrifices in that Land, and at the *Tabernacle* or *Temple* there; their *Sabbatical Years* and *Jubilees*, and many other Constitutions of a peculiar Nature, and which were confined in the original Appointment to the Land of *Canaan*; all these Things sufficiently shew that they were originally designed quietly to enjoy their own Land, governed by their own Laws, without ambitiously attempting to extend their Conquests and disturb their Neighbours. Nor can it be supposed that *Moses*, who was a very wise Man, much less that *God* himself would have ever given them such Laws and Constitutions as these, if he had had it in view to encourage the People to go conquer all Nations, and extend their Empire and Religion throughout the World. Must they attempt an universal or extensive Dominion, all whose most solemn acts of Religion and Worship were by the fundamental Law of their Polity to be confined to one *small Country*? and to one particular Place there? Must they attempt to disturb and annoy their Neighbours meerly from an ambitious desire of Empire, when all their *Males* were expressly and solemnly obliged by their Law to appear three times a Year before *God* at the Sanctuary, and to leave their Towns and Houses unguarded, except with Women and Children? The same Remark may be made upon that Constitution whereby their Kings are forbidden to *multiply Horses* to themselves. Can it be supposed, that *Moses* would have commanded this if he had designed his People for extending their Conquests through a great part of the World, which could scarce be expected or attempted without Cruelty? This is a plain Proof that he designed to prevent or mortify a restless Ambition and Desire of Conquest, by in a great measure

rendering them incapable of it in an ordinary way. Though if they were invaded he exhorts them not to *fear* the Horses and Chariots of their Enemies, but to *trust* in God; to shew, that they were designed chiefly for defending themselves in the Land which God had given them, and not for arbitrarily offending and invading others from no other Motive or View but that of Conquest. When *Moses* promises national Blessings and Prosperity to them upon their Obedience, *Levit. xxvi. Deut. xxviii.* he doth not mention God's raising them to universal Empire, but that God would give them Plenty, and Peace, and Prosperity, that they might dwell safely and comfortably in their own Land; and that they should be more happy and honourable than other Nations; and that he would give them Victory over their Enemies that *should rise up against them*, i. e. that should attempt to disturb and invade them: For that this is the meaning of that Phrase in the sacred Writings is evident from many Passages. See particularly, *Deut. xix. 11. 2 Kings xvi. 7. Ps. iii. 1. xvii. 7. xviii. 48. lix. 1—xcii. 11.*

These Observations will help us to form a right Judgment of the military Laws in the *xxth* Chapter of *Deuteronomy* which the Author refers to. If we compare this with other Passages of the Law, and with the whole of their Constitution, we shall be convinced that the Design of that Chapter is not to direct and encourage them to *extend their Conquests as far as they could, and to destroy any or every Nation that would not submit to become their Subjects and Tributaries upon demand.* As if they might invade whomsoever they would without provocation, or any other Reason than the desire of making Conquests. This is never once mentioned in the whole Law as a sufficient Reason for going to War. They are not encouraged or commanded to invade any except the devoted Nations, which was a peculiar Case,

Case, and in which they were only the Executioners of the just Sentence denounced against them by God himself for their execrable Wickedness. But there were several even of the neighbouring Nations whom they were expressly forbidden to meddle with ; as the *Edomites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites* ; and were told that God had given those Nations the several Countries they possessed for an Inheritance, from which they were not to endeavour to dispossess them. The *Ammonites* and *Moabites* were amongst the Nations with whom they were not to cultivate any particular Friendship or Amity, or to seek their Prosperity, because of their injurious and wicked Treatment of them when they came out of *Egypt*, Deut. xxiii. 3, 4, 6. yet they were expressly prohibited to invade their Country, or to distress them, Deut. xi. 5, 9, 15. this sufficiently shewed that they were not causelessly, and of their own meer Motion to invade other Nations, even though they were *Idolaters*, from a meer Desire of Conquest, and enlarging their Dominion : The Rules therefore given them for their Wars in the xxth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, do not relate to Wars undertaken only from a Motive of Ambition and Conquest, but to Wars that were just and necessary. And with respect to the Management of such Wars they are directed and encouraged in the first Place, not to be afraid of their Enemies in the Field, let them appear to be never so numerous and formidable, and better appointed for War than themselves ; for that *God would be with them*. And then if they conquered their Enemies in battle, they are instructed how to deal with their Cities which they should come to besiege, ver. 10, &c. Let the Provocation given them be never so great, and the Cause of the War never so just, and though they had it in their Power to destroy their Enemies, yet they were obliged when they came before any of their Cities first to *proclaim Peace* unto them, that is, to offer to

to let them live quietly in the Enjoyment of their Country, and of their Goods and Possessions, on Condition of their becoming Subjects and Tributaries to them. Thus we are told concerning the *Moabites* and *Syrians*, that they *became David's Servants, and brought him Gifts*, 2 Sam. viii. 26. and with regard to *Solomon*, that *he reigned over all the Kingdoms from the River, that is, Euphrates, unto the Land of the Philistines, and to the Border of Egypt*, which was the utmost Extent of Dominion that ever was promised any way to belong to *Abraham's Seed*) they brought Presents, and served Solomon all the Days of his Life, 1 Kings iv. 21. and it is probable, that except the Tribute they paid they still continued to be governed by their own Laws and Customs. Now it would be hard to shew the Injustice of imposing a Tribute on a conquered Enemy, whom they had beaten in the Field in a just War, and whose Cities surrendered to them as Conquerors. For it is plain that this is the Case here supposed.

The next Direction given them, relates to a City that when summoned by their victorious Arms refused to surrender to them, and was taken by assault. For this is the plain meaning of it when it is said, *if it (the City) will make no Peace with thee, but will make War against thee, then thou shalt besiege it; and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine Hands, thou shalt smite, &c.* ver. 12, 13. Though they had refused the first Summons, yet if they surrendered before they were taken by Assault, and consented to the Conditions proposed to them, they were to be spared; for though only one Summons or Offer of Peace is mentioned, yet no time is limited, but it is plainly intimated, that if they should make an Answer of Peace, and open, or surrender unto them, at any time before their City was taken by Force, their Lives were to be spared. But if they obstinately rejected all Offers of Peace, and

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after being made to know what they were to expect in case of being taken by Force, still refused to surrender, in that case when *God delivered the City into their Hands*, that is, when they took it by Assault, (for this is the meaning of that Phrase when applied to besieged Cities, see *Josh. x. 30, 32.*) they were allowed to kill all the *Males*, i. e. all that bore Arms: * As hath been usual in the taking of Towns by Storm. And yet even then they were not in the Fury of an Assault to kill *Women and Children*, see *ver. 14.* Instances of which there have

* In those Days all the Men were wont to fight and bear Arms in a time of War, especially in a City that was besieged and assaulted. As we may see in the Case of *Ai*, *Jos. viii. 14—16.* and may be plainly gathered from many other Instances. There were not properly regular Forces in Garrison then as now, but all the Citizens were Soldiers. And on this Foundation it is that when a City was taken by Assault, the Males and they only were suffered to be put to the Sword: That is, the *Victors* by this Law had a Liberty given them to slay the Men, or in other Words those that fought against them and resisted them. Tho' still this did not put it out of their Power to shew Mercy to such of them as they should see fit to spare. *Josephus* gives the Sense of the Law of *Moses* with regard to the Management of the War thus, that when they overcame in fight *κατὰ κράτος τῇ μάχῃ* they were to kill those that resisted *τοὺς ἀντιτάξαντες*, the Word properly relates to those that opposed them in fight, or were in Arms against them, and were to keep the rest alive for tribute. And this seems to have been the real Intention of this Law, that they were to put those only to the Sword that resisted them, and this even in Towns taken by Storm or Assault, when there is usually a greater Liberty for Slaughter than in other Cases, and against an Enemy that had unjustly made War upon them. And if we may credit the most eminent *Jewish* Writers they thought themselves obliged when they besieged or assaulted a Town not to begin it closely on all Sides, but to leave one Side open, that such of their Enemies as had a Mind might flee away and save their Lives. And this Custom they will have to be derived from *Moses*. So *Maimonides* represents it. And that this was a very antient Tradition among them appears from the *Targum of Ben Uzziel* in *Numb. xxxi. 7.* See *Selden de Jure Nat. et Gentium*, Lib. vi. Cap. 15. and *Grot. de Jure Belli*, &c. Lib. iii. Cap. 11. l. 14.

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been in many Nations, and even among the *Romans* themselves, and that under Generals famed for their Humanity, as *Scipio*, *Germanicus*, *Titus*, &c. See *Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis*, Lib. iii. Chap. 4. Sect. 9. We find that in the Language of Scripture the Ruin of a City taken by Assault is sometimes expressed by *dashing their Children against the Stones*; because it was but too usual to do this on such Occasions, *Jf. xiii. 16, 18. Ezek. ix. 6.* but the *Israelites* are here absolutely forbidden to imitate this Barbarity. They were even in the Heat of an Assault to spare the *Women* and *little Ones*; and the Word we there render *little Ones*, signifies any Male or Female under *twenty* Years of Age, † the principal Design therefore of this Law seems to be to limit their Rage, and to shew the utmost to which they were ever to proceed in Cases of this kind, when they took Towns by Assault or by Storm: They were only to kill the *Males*, that is, those that bore Arms, but were not to wreck their Fury upon the young Ones, or the weaker Sex. And with respect to the *Males*, or Men in Arms, if they had taken any of them Captives, and had spared their Lives, this would not properly have been a Breach of this Law, which was not designed absolutely to bind them in all such Cases to kill all the *Males*; but not to kill any other but the Men, and so the *Jews* understood it: Who never looked upon it to be unlawful for them in ordinary Cases to take Men Captives in War, and to spare their Lives. And this is plainly supposed in the Answer which *Elisba* the Prophet, who very well understood the Law, makes to the King of *Israel*, when he asked whether he should smite the *Syrian* Soldiers whom he had taken in *Samaria*; *Thou shalt not smite them: wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast ta-*

† See *Schindler* in voce, פו.

ken Captive with thy Sword and with thy Bow?
2 Kings vi. 22. *

I would observe by the way that with respect to the Women that were taken Captives, the *Israelites* were not allowed by the Law to violate them. If any of them saw and liked a beautiful Captive, he was first to take her to his House, and allow her a Month to bewail her Father and Mother, which shewed a great deal of Tenderness and Humanity towards the Captive, and at the same time gave Space for the Heat of his Passion to abate; and if his Affection to her still continued, he was to marry her, and take her for his Wife, or if he did not continue to love her, was to give her her Liberty, see *Deut. xxi. 10—15.* This wise Constitution was designed to lay a Restraint on their exorbitant Lusts, to which Soldiers are very prone to give a full loose, especially in a Town taken by Assault.

And lastly, the Orders given in that xxth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, ver. 19. not to *destroy the Fruit Trees* in a Siege, because they were *Man's Life*; or useful for sustaining Life, and which the *Hebrew* Doctors justly interpret, as extending to all things of the like Nature; that is, not to commit needless cruel Wastes and Devastations in the Enemy's Land, shews that *Moses* was far from encouraging such a fierce and savage Spirit in the Management of their Wars as this Writer would have us believe.

I would only farther observe, that whereas *Moses* after giving these Directions as to the Management of the War saith, *Thus shalt thou do unto all the Cities which are very far off from thee*: This is not to be understood, as this Writer would have it, as if it

* Of which Words *Ben Gerson* gives this Sense. If thou wouldst slay Persons because thou hadst thy self taken them Captives in War, it would be a very unworthy Action, and it would be much more so to slay those whom the blessed God himself hath made thy Captives. And *Jarchi* explains it to the same purpose.

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was designed to encourage them to carry their conquering Arms through all the World to the most distant Nations. What is meant by the Cities *very far off* from them, *Moses* himself explains in the following Words; for he immediately adds, *Which are not of the Cities of these Nations.* The latter Phrase is evidently designed to be explicatory of the former; and to shew whom they were to understand by the Cities that were very far off from them, even all that did not properly belong to the devoted Nations of the Land of *Canaan*. And it is certain that in Scripture Language the Words *far off* do not always denote a great distance, but are sometimes applied to Places that were not truly remote. Thus we are told concerning the Waters of *Jordan* when the *Israelites* passed over, that they *rose up on a heap very far from the City Adam that is beside Zaretan*, *Josh. iii. 16.* tho' this was not many Miles off in the Plains of *Jordan*; compare, *1 Kings viii. 46.* The Inhabitants of *Laiſh* are said to be *far from the Zidonians*, *Judg. xviii. 7, 28.* tho' they were but a Day's Journey from them, according to *Josepbus*. And any Stranger that is not of *Israel* is represented as *of a far Country*, and *as coming from a far Country*, *Deut. xxix. 22.* *1 Kings viii. 41.* *2 Chron. vi. 32.* So that the Meaning is plainly this, that they were to conform to the Directions he had given them, in all their Wars with any other Nations but the *Canaanites* whom God had devoted to utter Destruction.

Having considered what the Author objects against the Law of *Moses* from its Constitutions of War, and supposed Intentions of universal Conquest, I shall not need to say much to that part of his Reflections, where he urges it as a Proof of the Spirit of Inhumanity and *Persecution* in that Law, that it obliged them absolutely to separate themselves from all Idolaters, and to have no Alliances with them. He tells us, " that by the Law even the

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“Profelytes of the Gate who were not obliged to be circumcised, yet were obliged absolutely to separate themselves from all Idolaters, or People of other Religions ; [so he very candidly interprets it, as if to be *Idolaters*, and to be *People of other Religions* were Terms of the same Signification.] And that this Separation was to regard all Family Intercourse, of Eating and Drinking together, Cohabitation, Intermarriages, Alliances in War, or any other Conjunction of Interest, tho’ it should appear never so necessary for mutual Defence and Self-preservation ; and that this strict and rigid Separation from all the rest of the World ; and abjuring their Friendship and Alliances as Idolaters, is so clearly interwoven with all the Laws of *Moses*, that it may be called the fundamental Constitution of that State or Body politic, p. 360.”

It will be easily owned that the *Jews* were by their Constitution and Peculiarities designed to be kept a *separate* People, and from confounding themselves with other Nations ; and this was ordered for very wise and valuable Ends, some of which have been hinted at already. But the *Profelytes of the Gate* were not bound by those peculiar distinctive Rites, that kept the *Jews* separate from other Nations ; especially those that related to the Distinction of Meats, and to ceremonial Impurities. And whereas he tells us that the *Profelytes of the Gate* were obliged absolutely to separate from all Idolaters, even with regard to *Alliances in War, or any other Conjunction of Interest*, tho’ it should appear never so necessary for mutual Defence and Self-Preservation ; this is not true even of the *Jews* themselves. They were not obliged by any Precept of that Law never to have any *Alliances in War, or any other Conjunction of Interest* with the Heathen Nations, though it should appear never so necessary for mutual Defence and Self-Preservation. The Precepts
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of the Law forbidding them to make any Covenant or League relating to the *Nations of Canaan*, or the *Inhabitants of the Land*, as is evident from all the Passages where this is mentioned, see *Exod. xxiii. 32, 33. Exod. xxxiv. 12, 15. Deut. vii. 1, 2.* to which may be added, *Judg. ii. 2.* The learned *Grotius* hath in a few Words set this matter in a clear Light, *de Jure Belli & Pacis, Lib. ii. Cap. 15. Sect. 9.* where he observes that the *Jews* are nowhere in the Law forbidden to make Treaties of Commerce with the *Pagans*, or any other such Covenants which tended to the mutual Benefit of both Parties. He instances in *Solomon's League* with *Hiram King of Tyre*, for which he is so far from being blamed, that it is mentioned as an instance of the great *Wisdom* which the Lord had given him, *1 Kings v. 12.* and before that there had been a great Friendship between *Hiram* and *David*, ver. 1. as also between King *David* and *Nabash King of the Ammonites*: And he was willing also to have kept up the same friendly Intercourse with his Son, though no Man was more zealous against Idolatry than that Prince, see *2 Sam. x. 2.* So far is it from being true which this Writer here alledges that they were to *abjure all Friendship and Alliances with Idolaters*, and that they were not to maintain any *Peace or Amity with any other Nation, or People, but on Condition of submitting to them as their Subjects, Slaves, and Tributaries*, as he affirms, p. 29. and *Grotius* there observes that the *Maccabees* who were very strict in observing the Law of *Moses*, entered into a League with the *Lacedemonians*, and with the *Romans*, for mutual Assistance and Defence, and that with the Consent of the Priests and People, and even offered Sacrifices for their Prosperity, *1 Mac. Ch. viii. and xii.* As to *Marriages with Idolaters* the Case is different. This is a much nearer Union than what arises from Treaties of Commerce, or Leagues made for mutual Defence.

It depends more on a Person's own Choice and Inclination, whereas the other may be necessary in certain Conjunctions and Circumstances for the publick Safety. The Danger of being perverted to Idolatry is much greater in this Case than in the other, and of having the Children and Family bred up to Idolatry and false Worship, which every good Man would be desirous to prevent.

And accordingly, even the *Christian Institution*, which is so kind and benevolent, and every where breathes universal Charity and good Will towards Mankind; yet forbids our entring into a conjugal Relation with *Idolaters* and *Unbelievers*; see 2 Cor. vi. 14—16. So that this Part of the Mosaick Constitution is far from proving, what our Author produces it for, that it was founded on the Principles of Persecution, and on a Want of Benevolence to Mankind. It is not indeed to be wondered at that this Writer finds fault with this, who commends the *Gnosticks* not only for marrying with Idolaters, but for feasting with them in the Idol Temples, and joining with them in all the outward Acts of their idolatrous Worship, which he seems to think not only lawful but commendable, provided they still kept from a *mental Adoration* of the Idol, 388, 389. It will be easily granted this never was allowed to the *Jews*, nor is it to those whom he is pleased to call *Jewish Christians*, that is, to those that are Christians upon the Foot of the New Testament, or the Religion taught by Christ and his Apostles. And however such a Conduct may be consistent with this Man's *moral Philosophy*, yet how it can be made to consist with common Honesty cannot see.

C H A P. V.

The Author's Pretence that the Law of Moses encouraged human Sacrifices as the highest Acts of Religion and Devotion, when offered not to Idols, but to the true God. Such Sacrifices plainly forbidden in the Law to be offered to God. His Account of Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. considered. The Argument he draws from the Law for the Redemption of the First-born turned against him. The Case of Abraham's offering up his Son Isaac considered at large. Not done in Conformity to the Customs of the Canaanites. The true State of the Case laid down. Human Sacrifices not encouraged by this Instance, but the contrary. Abraham himself had full Assurance that this Command came from God. Upon what Grounds his having had such a Command from God is credible and probable to us. It could not be owing to the Illusions of an evil Spirit: Nor to the Force of his own Enthusiasm. The Author's Pretence, that this Instance destroys the Law of Nature, and leaves all to meer arbitrary Will and Pleasure, examined.

THE Moral Philosopher has several other Objections against the Law of *Moses* scattered through his Book. He would fain have it thought that that Law encourages and approves human Sacrifices. The Author of Christianity as old as the Creation had laboured this Point before him, and what he offers on this Head hath received a full Answer *. But these Gentlemen are never weary of repeating the same Objections with as much Confidence as if not the least Notice had been ever taken of them before. This Writer is pleased to tell us

* See Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, Vol. II. p. 468. & Seq.

that, "among the Free-will Offerings offered by the Jews under the Law, human Sacrifices were looked upon as the most efficacious and acceptable to the Lord. And though they were not exacted by Law" [Though if the Interpretation he pretends to give of *Lev. xxviii. 28, 29.* be just, they were exacted by Law] "Yet they were encouraged and indulged as the Riches and Donations, and as the Testimony of the most perfect Religion, and highest Degree of Love to God. Indeed such Burnt-Offerings of their Sons and Daughters to Idols and false Gods were represented as the greatest possible Abomination: And for the same Reason such Oblations were regarded as the highest possible Acts of Religion and Devotion, when they were intended and given up as Sacrifices of Atonement to the true God, p. 129; 130."

But certainly, since there are such particular Directions given in the Law relating to Sacrifices, appointing what things were to be offered to God, and in what Manner; if human Sacrifices, or the Offering of their Sons and Daughters, were there designed to be encouraged as the most valuable Oblations, and Acts of the most perfect Religion, there would have been Directions in the Law concerning them. And there not being the least Direction there given relating to any such Sacrifices, when there are such minute and particular Directions in every other kind of Oblations, is a manifest Proof that they were never designed to be encouraged and approved by that Law, and indeed is equivalent to an express Prohibition of them under that Constitution. For they were strictly enjoined to keep close to the Law in their sacred Ceremonies, and not to add thereto or diminish from it, and particularly were not suffered to offer any other Sacrifices, or in any other Manner than was there expressly appointed. But besides this, there is as plain a Prohibition of

48 *Human Sacrifices not encouraged*

those human Sacrifices as can be desired in the Law itself, *Deut. xii. 30, 31.* In that Chapter God forbids his People to worship him in the same Manner and with the same Rites, with which the Heathens worshipped their Idols. In the beginning of that Chapter, after having mentioned their worshipping their Gods upon the *high Mountains and Hills*, and in the *Groves*, and with *graven Images*, he adds, *ver. 4. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God;* that is, thou shalt not offer Sacrifices to him in the high Places and Groves as they worshipped their Idols; but as it follows, *ver. 5, 6. Unto the Place which the Lord thy God shall chuse, shall ye come, and thither shall ye bring your Burnt-Offerings, &c.* and then, *ver. 30, 31.* he forbids their imitating the Heathens in offering up human Sacrifices to him as they did unto their Gods. *Take heed to thy self that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed before thee, and that thou enquire not after their Gods, saying, how did these Nations serve their Gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: For every Abomination to the Lord which he hateth, have they done unto their Gods: For even their Sons and Daughters they have burnt in the Fire unto their Gods.* It is very evident here that God plainly forbids his People not only to worship their Gods, but to imitate them in the manner of their Worship. And particularly he mentions their sacrificing of their Sons and Daughters to their Gods, as a Thing which was highly abominable in his Sight; and that therefore the *Israelites* should not imitate this detestable Practice in his Worship. *They should not do so unto the Lord their God.* And in the Words immediately following, in Opposition to this, he charges them to observe to do whatsoever he commanded them; and forbids them to add thereto or diminish from it. Taking the whole Passage together, I think it plainly appears from it, that by the Law of *Moses* God was so far from

from encouraging the *Israelites* to offer up human Sacrifices to him, as the Heathens did to their Idols, or teaching them to regard it as the highest possible act of Devotion when done to the true God, that he could not more strongly express his absolute Detestation and Abhorrence of it.

There is no Necessity therefore of examining the Author's Account of that Passage, *Lev. xxvii. 28, 29.* which cannot admit the Interpretation he puts upon it. Indeed the Account he gives of it, and of the Vows intended in that Chapter, is so confused and obscure, that I must confess I do not understand it, and it is of little Importance to seek out his Meaning. I shall only observe that whereas he speaks of two Sorts of Vows, *general and special*, one Distinction between them he supposes to lie in this, that with regard to the former there was a right of Redemption by the Law; but in the latter Case, whatever Portion or Thing had been thus especially vowed, *must be destroyed by Fire, and taken off from the use of Man as a Burnt-Offering unto the Lord.* And to this he applies the 28th and 29th Verses, which he renders thus: *Nevertheless nothing separate from the common use, that a Man doth separate unto the Lord, of all that he hath, whether it be Man or Beast, or Land of his Inheritance, may be sold or redeemed; for every thing separate from the common Use is holy unto the Lord: That is, according to this Author's account of it, it must be destroyed by Fire, and taken off from the use of Man as a Burnt-Offering unto the Lord.* So that if his Interpretation be admitted, the Field of a Man's Possession when thus devoted to the Lord, was to be destroyed by Fire, and taken off from the use of Man as a Burnt-Offering unto the Lord. And yet he that here makes the Nature of these special Vows to consist in this, that what was thus specially vowed to God was not to be redeemed, but of necessity must be destroyed by Fire as a Burnt-Offering unto

the Lord ; in a Page or two after declares, that the Thing devoted to God by this special Vow became the *absolute Property of the Priest, who might either sacrifice it, or sell it as he thought fit* ; and he thinks that if there were not *as many Burnt-Offerings of the human Kind, as there might have been, it was because the Priest had good Reason for it, not to burn any Thing in common Cases that would yield Money,* p. 141. Thus our *Moral Philosopher* in his eager Zeal to expose the *Priests Mercenariness*, doth not reflect that he contradicts and exposes *himself* as a captious and inconsistent Writer.

I shall not enter into a large Explication of that Passage, *Lev. xxvii. 28, 29.* which he has so miserably mangled. It is done fully and accurately by the most learned Mr. *Selden, lib. 4. de Jure Nat. & Gent. cap. 6, 7, 9, 10, 11.* I shall only observe briefly, that the former part of that Chapter relates to Things dedicated or consecrated to God by a *simple Vow*, whether Men or Beasts, or Houses, or Lands, which might, after having been thus dedicated or consecrated, be redeemed with Money. The 28th Verse relates to Things devoted to God by a *Cherem*, (for that is the Word in the Original, different from what was used concerning the other Vows) that is, by a Vow of a peculiar Nature, accompanied with a Curse, (for this is the proper Notation of the Word) and whatever a Man *should thus devote unto the Lord of all that he had* (that is, of Persons or Things that were his own Property) *whether of Man or Beast, or Field of his Possession*, was to be perpetually employed for the Uses to which it was devoted. The Man that gave or vowed it could never redeem it. If it was Land that was thus devoted, it was absolutely given to the Use of the Sanctuary ; if it was a Man, or a Slave, (for this is spoken concerning such Men, as were their absolute Property, and included under that general Expression,

Expression, *all that a Man hath*, that is, his proper Goods) he was to be perpetually employed in the Service of the Sanctuary, or for the Use of the Priests : and never to be redeemed : such probably were the *Netbinims*, whom David and the Princes are said to have appointed for the Service of the Levites, *Ezra viii. 20.* This by the unanimous Consent of all the *Jewish* Writers is all that is intended in the 28th Verse ; but the 29th Verse which follows, doth not relate to Things which a Man should devote to sacred Uses out of what he had, that is, of his own Possession or Property, of which alone the 28th Verse is to be understood ; but it relates to Persons devoted to Destruction by a solemn *Cherem* or Curse ; as the *Canaanites* were by God's own Appointment, for their execrable Wickedness. An Instance of which we have in *Jericho*, *Josh. vii. 17, 18.* where this Word *Cherem* is several times made use of to signify their being accursed, or devoted to utter Destruction. And such of the *Israelites* as fell into open Idolatry, were also by the Appointment of the Law itself to be devoted to Destruction. See *Exod. xxii. 20.* *He that sacrificeth unto any God save unto the Lord he shall be utterly destroyed ; or he shall be devoted.* For the Word there used in the Original is precisely the same that is used in the Passage we are considering, *Lev. xxvii. 29.* and is here rendered *devoted*. The Word *Cherem* is also used, *Deut. xiii. 15.* to signify the Destruction of a City that revolted to Idolatry ; it was to be destroyed as execrable and accursed. And accordingly the Septuagint render the original Word which we translate *destroying it utterly*, *ἀναδευαν ἀναδευατιε*, *ye shall curse it with a Curse.* And none of these Persons that were thus devoted to Destruction for just Causes by a solemn *Cherem* or Curse were to be redeemed : No Ransom whatsoever was to be accepted for them, but they were sure to be put to Death.

Death. This is the Account the *Jews* themselves give of this Passage, *Lev. xxvii. 29.* and which renders it perfectly consistent with other Passages in the Law; but certainly it cannot be understood to relate to human Sacrifices, which, as I have shewn, are no where required in the Law, yea are plainly forbidden there.

As to the Instance of *Jephthah* which he here produces, whether he did indeed sacrifice his Daughter unto the Lord, is a Question debated amongst the most learned Criticks both *Jews* and *Christians*; and still like to be so: tho' this Writer with his usual Confidence very magisterially determines it, without bringing any new Light to the Question, except by calling the Opinion he does not like monstrous and ridiculous. But let us suppose that *Jephthah* did indeed sacrifice his Daughter, it only follows that he did wrong in it, thro' a mistaken Zeal and Scrupulosity: since, as I have shewn, the Law of *Moses* no where allowed human Sacrifices. None of the *Jews* ancient or modern that ever mention this Action of *Jephthah's* approve his doing it: and if it had been approved and thought fit to be imitated, how comes it that this is the only Instance that can be produced, and that we have no Account of any of their most zealous great Men or *Heroes* ever offering such human Oblations, as undoubtedly they would have done, if such Oblations had been regarded as the most exalted Acts of Devotion, as this Author would have us believe?

The Argument he endeavours to bring from the Law for redeeming the *First-born* may be turned against him, and proves the very contrary of what he produces it for. Since when God challenges every first born Male of Man and Beast to himself, in memorial of his slaying the *First-born* of the *Egyptians*, and sparing the *Israelites*, which was a wise Constitution, aptly contrived to keep up

a constant Memorial of this most extraordinary Event, and consequently of their Deliverance out of Egypt, the Remembrance of which it was of high Importance to preserve throughout all their Generations ; I say, when he made this Constitution, he commanded the First-born among clean Beasts to be sacrificed ; but with regard to the First-born of unclean Beasts, which were forbidden in the Law to be sacrificed, and all the First-born among Men, they were expressly commanded to redeem them. A manifest Proof, that as he would not have unclean Beasts to be sacrificed, so neither would he have any human Sacrifices to be offered to him. This is the plain original Law relating to that Matter, *Exod. xiii. 15, 18.* Yet this Writer has the Confidence to tell us, that this Law concerning the Redemption of the First-born, which he calls a *severe Law, whereby were enjoined such terrible things in Righteousness*, laid them under an Obligation to sacrifice their First-born Children unto God. He is pleased indeed to allow that *this Law was afterwards very much mitigated or rather repealed, viz. upon God's accepting all the Males of Levi for the First-born Males of all other Tribes, as a Ransom and Redemption of their Lives and Souls.* And if we would know how far that severe Law was mitigated or repealed, he informs us that it consisted in this, that God hereby remitted the legal Obligation of human Sacrifices, and left it to the free Choice and voluntary Oblation of his People, whether their Burnt-Offerings of this Kind should be either Male or Female, and whether it should be the First-born or not, see p. 137, 138. So that he supposes, that before the Levites were taken instead of the First-born, the Israelites were under a legal Obligation to offer up all their First-born Male Children, as Sacrifices or Burnt-offerings unto the Lord ; and afterwards they had the Favour done them to leave it to their Choice, not whether they should offer

offer up any of their Children at all, but to offer either *Males* or *Females*, or any *other* of their Children, whether of the First-born or not.

But certainly an Author that is capable of writing at this rate, can have little regard either to Truth or Decency, or to his own Reputation; since it is impossible he should not be sensible that all this is his own Fiction, without the least Foundation in the Law itself to support it. The original Law which he refers to, *Exod. xiii.* is so far from laying the *Israelites* under a *legal Obligation* to offer their First-born as Sacrifices to God, that to have done so would have been the most express and manifest *Breach* of that Law, which at the same time that it commands the Firstlings of clean Beasts to be sacrificed, expressly commands again and again, not that the First-born of Men should be sacrificed, but that they should be *redeemed*, see *Exod. xiii. 13, 14.* see also *Numb. xviii. 15, 16.* And when God took the *Levites* instead of the First-born to himself, and declared that they should be his, as the First-born should have been his in whose stead they were taken; this plainly shews that as the Firstlings of clean Beasts were by virtue of their Consecration to the Lord to be sacrificed, because Sacrifices of such Things were what the Lord accepted; so the First-born among Men by virtue of their being sanctified to the Lord, must have been not sacrificed, but *appropriated* to his more immediate Use, and to the Service of the Sanctuary; because God did not accept of human Sacrifices. And accordingly it pleased him to take the *Levites* in their stead to serve him in his Sanctuary, whom he gave to *Aaron* and the Priests to minister unto them. This is the plain Meaning of that Transaction of which we have an Account, *Numb. iii. 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 41, 45.* His poor playing upon the Word *redeemed* is too trifling and contemptible to be taken Notice of in opposition to the evident Meaning of the Text.

The Instance he produceth of *Abraham's* attempting to offer up his Son *Isaac*, is so far from proving that God is represented in the Books of *Moses* as approving human Sacrifices, that it rather proves the contrary: Since tho' God for the Trial of his Faith and Obedience saw fit to command him to offer up *Isaac*, yet he would not suffer him to execute it. His forbidding him by a Voice from Heaven to lay his Hand upon his Son, shewed that tho' he would have his Servants pay an entire Submission to his Authority and Will in all Things, and to be ready to renounce their dearest Interests for his sake, yet to be worshipped with human Sacrifices was what he did not approve, and would not in any Case permit: and therefore would not suffer it to take effect, not even in this single and extraordinary Instance, tho' he could easily have raised *Isaac* from the Dead, and have thus restored him to his indulgent Father.

But this Case deserves to be more distinctly considered, especially as our Author here expresseth himself with such a peculiar Air of Confidence and Triumph, as if it were a thing that could not possibly be defended. And many have taken Pleasure in representing it as absolutely contrary to all Justice and Reason, and the Law of Nature, tho' the Scripture bestoweth high Encomiums upon it as a noble Instance of *Abraham's* Faith and Obedience.

Our Moral Philosopher would be thought to state the Question relating to the Case of *Abraham* with greater Exactness than hath been hitherto done, and pretends that it hath been very much mistaken by those that have undertaken to defend it. He acknowledgeth, that no doubt but every positive Law, of what Nature or Kind soever, must be just and right, supposing it to be a Command from God, how unreasonable or unfit soever it might appear to our weak, imperfect and limited Understandings. But then he

saith,

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saith, the Question is, how God should command any such Things, or what Proof could be given of it if he did. A Question which our Systematical Divines and positive Law-men never cared to meddle with, tho' this is the only thing they ought to speak to, if they would say any thing to the purpose, p. 134.

It is not improper here to observe, that from his own Concessions it plainly follows, that a thing's appearing unreasonable or unfit to our Understandings is not a sufficient Reason for our rejecting it, if we have otherwise a sufficient Proof that this Command came from God. For in that Case we ought to charge the apparent Unfitness of it on the Weakness or Darkeness of our own Understandings, and to believe that it would appear to us fit and reasonable, if we viewed it in the same Light in which the divine Understanding beholds it, and could take in the whole Compass of Things, and the Relation they bear to the Order and Harmony of the Whole. But then he saith the Question is, how God should command such Things, or what Proof could be given of it if he did? As to the Question, How God should command such Things, i. e. Things that may appear unreasonable or unfit to our weak, imperfect, and limited Understandings? the Answer is plain, He may command such Things whenever it so happens, that tho' thro' the Weakness of our Understandings they appear unfit to us, yet in his own comprehensive Wisdom he sees them to be fit and proper to be required of us in that Circumstance of Things; and may therefore see Reasons for laying those Commands upon us, which we do not at present see, but shall know afterwards. But he farther asks, if God gave such a Command, what Proof could be given of it? And he particularly asks, How came Abraham to know this? In answer, that Abraham knew it by extraordinary Revelation, which may be conveyed into the Mind with such overpowering, irresistible Light and Evi-

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* See Vol. II

dence that a Man can no more doubt of it, than of any thing that he hears or sees. Concerning which see above, p. 12, 13, 14. where it is also shewn that this Author himself acknowledgeth that such an immediate Revelation may give an Assurance and Certainty to the Mind equal to that arising from a Mathematical Demonstration. And particularly with regard to this Case of *Abraham*, I cannot but think the Reflection *Maimonides* makes a very just and sensible one: "That we are taught by this History that the Prophets were fully assured of the Truth of those Things which God spake to them, which they believed as strongly as things of Sense. For if *Abraham* had in the least doubted, whether this was the Will of God or no, he would never have consented to a Thing which Nature abhorred." *More Nevoch*. p. 3. cap. 24.

It will farther confirm this if it be considered, that this was not the first time of God's communicating his Will to *Abraham* in a way of extraordinary Revelation. He had done it several times before, and that in such a manner as gave him full Assurance that it was God that spake to him *. In Obedience to the Will of God thus signified he had left his own Country and Kindred, and came into a Land that he was an entire Stranger to. And when it was declared to him in the same way of extraordinary Revelation, that he should have a Son by his Wife *Sarah*, tho' he was an hundred Years old, and she was ninety, and had been barren all her Days; he firmly believed it, however incredible it might seem to be, because he knew and was persuaded that it was God himself that promised it. And this Promise of God, tho' contrary to the Course of Nature, was exactly fulfilled.

* See this well urged, *Revelation examined with Candour*, Vol. II. Dissert. 8.

When therefore the Command came to him about sacrificing his Son, it found him perfectly well acquainted with the manner of God's appearing to him, and communicating his Will. And however strange and unaccountable that Command might appear, yet he knew by undoubted Evidences that it was the same *God* that spake to him, and gave him this Command, that had spoken to him on so many Occasions before, and had entred into Covenant with him, and given him so many Tokens of his Favour. And as his Soul was steadily possess'd with the most adoring Thoughts of God's supreme Authority and Dominion, and the most unshaken Persuasion of his Power, Wisdom, Righteousness, and Goodness, so he did not doubt but he had wise and glorious Ends in view in this particular extraordinary Method of Procedure, tho' he could not at present distinctly discern them; and therefore exercised an *implicit* Dependence on the supreme Wisdom and Goodness, and an entire Resignation to the divine Will. He knew what Promises God had made to him with regard to *Isaac*, and was firmly persuaded that he would order Matters so that they should all be fully accomplished; and that as he had received him from God in an extraordinary manner, and now was going to give him up to him in Obedience to his Command, so he should receive him from him again to greater Advantage; *accounting that God was able to raise him from the Dead*; as the Apostle expresseth it, *Heb. xi. 19.* Considered in this View there is nothing in *Abraham's* Conduct that is absurd or contrary to Reason, nothing but what is suitable to his own amiable Character, and which manifested the most excellent Dispositions. And if God saw fit to take this extraordinary Method to produce those glorious Dispositions into a full and open Light to the View and Admiration of Angels and Men, by exercising him with one

of the greatest Trials that human Nature can undergo; (for what could be a greater Trial, than to command him to offer up his Son *Isaac*, who was the *Heir* of the *Promises*, which seemed not only to be a losing his most beloved Son, but a subverting all his own Hopes and the Promises made to him.) I can see nothing in this that can be proved to be unworthy of the divine Wisdom and Goodness. The temporary Pangs and Uneasiness this gave *Abraham*, were abundantly compensated by the unalterable Transports of Joy that must needs have overflowed his Soul, when he found his beloved Child at once restored to him as it were from the Dead, his Obedience so highly approved by God himself, and the Promises renewed to him in a more ample and glorious manner than before. This Triumph of his Faith in such an unparalleled Trial, must have produced a Satisfaction of Mind that lasted thro' his whole Life, and hath rendered him illustrious to all Generations.

But our Author puts another Question, and that is, "What Proof could *Abraham* give that he had any such Command or Revelation from God? Will any of our present Clergy undertake to prove that such a Command from God to *Abraham* can be now credible or probable to us? It may be probable enough that either *Abraham* had such a Belief or Conceit, or that *Moses* mistook the Case. But that God in this or any other Case should dissolve the Law of Nature, and make it a Man's Duty, as a Thing morally reasonable and fit, to act contrary to all the natural Principles and Passions of the human Constitution, is absolutely incredible, and cannot possibly be proved," p. 133.

I shall first shew what reasonable Proof we have that *Abraham* had such a Command or Revelation from God; and then answer the Author's Objections against it.

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He grants that it is probable enough, that either *Abraham* had such a Belief or Conceit, or that *Moses* mistook the Case. With regard to *Moses*, not to insist at present on his extraordinary *Inspiration*, of which there is sufficient Proof, he appears to have been perfectly well apprized of the principal Circumstances of the Life of *Abraham*, their great and renowned Ancestor; for whom they had the profoundest Veneration, and the Covenant made with whom was the grand Foundation of their Hopes. He carefully records the principal Events that befel him, and especially this, which was the most remarkable of them all. *Moses* himself was far from encouraging human Oblations, which, as I have shewn, are plainly forbidden in his Law. And it was a Thing in itself so strange and improbable, that such a Man as *Abraham*, of great Power and Riches, renowned for his Wisdom and Probity as well as Piety towards God, who had only one Son by his beloved Wife *Sarah*, the Child of his Old Age on whom he had fixed all his Hopes, should attempt to slay him with his own Hands, and offer him up for a Burnt-Offering, that no Reason can be given why *Moses* should have recorded it, if he had not been fully assured of the Truth of the Fact. No doubt, *Abraham* himself gave an Account of the whole Transaction, and how the Execution of it was prevented, and so did *Isaac* too, who was a competent Witness of it, being of sufficient Age when it happened, and who was himself to have been the *Victim*. And we may justly conclude, that there was no Particular of *Abraham's* whole Life which was more universally known, and the Memory of which was more carefully preserved than this, since it must necessarily have made a greater Noise than any of the rest, and was the most extraordinary of them all.

But the chief Question is still behind: Supposing that *Abraham* had a Belief or Conceit (to use this

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Author's Expressions) that he had received such a Command from God, *how can it be made credible or probable to us*, that he really received it from God? I answer, that either he received this Command from God, or it was owing to the Illusions of an evil Spirit, or to the Heat of his own enthusiastick Imagination. That it was not owing to the Illusions of an *evil Spirit*, is manifest among other Reasons from the Conclusion of it. Can it be supposed, that if an evil Spirit had carried him on so far, he would have hindred him when he was on the Point of accomplishing it? For it was evidently the same Power that bid him do it, and afterwards hindred his executing his Purpose. Besides, it cannot be supposed, that a wise and good God who had honoured *Abraham* with such extraordinary Manifestations of his Favour, and Revelations of his Will, would suffer an evil Being so to personate him, to give Commands to his faithful Servant in his Name, in a manner so proper to the Deity, that *Abraham* who had been used to the divine Communications, could not possibly distinguish this Message of *Satan* from the immediate Command of *God* himself, and was thereby under a Necessity of being deceived in a Matter of such vast Importance: And indeed, if it was an evil Spirit that gave this Command, and then so solemnly renewed the Promise and Covenant made with *Abraham*, it must be said that it was an evil Spirit that had all along appeared to him with such a divine Majesty, and that took upon him the Character of *God Almighty and All-sufficient*, and made him such Promises with regard to him and to his Seed. And if so, then it was an evil Spirit that appeared to *Moses*, and wrought all the stupendous Miracles that were done at the Establishment of the Law; and that inspired the *Prophets* under the Old Testament, and afterwards sent *Jesus Christ* into the World, and raised him from the Dead;

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and confirmed the Gospel with such a Series of illustrious Attestations. For he that did all this is the same that all along characterized himself with the Title of the *God of Abraham*; and there is a constant Reference to the Promises and Covenant made with *Abraham*, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

But besides that it would be to the highest degree absurd, to imagine that an evil Spirit should carry on an uniform Design to promote the Cause of Piety, Righteousness and Virtue among Men, and to destroy his own Kingdom and Interests; besides this, I say, to suppose an evil Being to have such an Influence, and to exert such amazing Acts of Power and Majesty for so long a Succession of Ages, without ever being controlled or over-ruled, is absolutely inconsistent with the Belief of a wise and good presiding Providence. It confounds all our Notions of the Deity, and introduces *two* supreme independent Principles, or rather it leaves no good Principle at all, but makes the God that governs the World, and presides over the Affairs of Men, to be an evil Being.

But if our Author will not venture to say that it was an evil Spirit that appeared unto *Abraham*, and gave him this Command, it will be said, that his believing he had a Command from God, was wholly owing to the Deception of his own Imagination, and the Force of his *Enthusiasm*. But neither can this be supported if the Circumstances of the Case be considered. *Abraham* believed that God had given him *Isaac* in an extraordinary manner; that by him he was to have the Posterity that was to inherit the Land of *Canaan*; by him he was to have that Seed in whom all the Families of the Earth were to be *blessed*; in a Word, he looked upon this Child as the *Heir* of all the Promises, and of the Covenant. These being his Sentiments, and which were confirmed in him by re-

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peated Revelations from time to time, it could never have entred into his Mind, meerly by the Force of his own Imagination, that God who had promised all this, would require of him to put *Isaac* to death, in whom alone all these Promises were to receive their Accomplishment. However strong we suppose the Force of his Enthusiasm to be, it would never have carried him to *imagine* a thing contrary to all his Hopes and Expectations, and to all the former Revelations which he believed he had received from God. It would have produced Visions more agreeable to his darling Hopes which he had so long conceived, and which were so deeply fixed in his Soul. But if we should suppose that he had conceived so strange and wild a Fancy in his Circumstances, as to cause him to believe so strongly, that God had given him such a Command, how comes it that the same heated Imagination did not carry him to *execute* it? Can it be imagined that the same Pang of Enthusiasm that wrought in him so strong and peremptory an Assurance, that it was the Command of Heaven that he should sacrifice his Son, and that carried him to the very Point of executing it, should in the same instant make him believe that he heard a Voice from Heaven *forbidding* him? This is absolutely inconceivable. His stopping in such Circumstances, and when he was so absolutely possessed with the Belief of a divine Command, could never be owing to the Workings meerly of his own Fancy; and shewed that neither the Beginning nor the Ending of it was owing to the meer Heat of his own Imagination.

Again, if all this from first to last was an Illusion of *Abraham's* own Imagination, and entirely owing to the Force of his Enthusiasm, then it must be supposed that his other Visions, and the Appearances of God to him, and the Promises made to him were also nothing else but Workings of his

own Fancy. And no doubt this Author would have it understood so. But we have good Evidence of the contrary. Could he by the meer Force of Enthusiasm foretel that his Posterity should be in a State of Servitude and Affliction in a foreign Land, and at the End of 400 Years be brought out in a wonderful manner with great Substance, and return again to the Land of *Canaan*, and have it given them for an Inheritance? see *Gen. xv. 13—16*. Could his Enthusiasm enable him certainly to know that his Wife *Sarah* who had been barren all her Days, and was then ninety Years old, should bear him a Child when he was an hundred? Or if he had been so wild as to have conceived an Expectation of a Thing so absolutely beyond the Course of Nature, could he by the meer Force of Enthusiasm have effected it?

Add to this, that *Abraham* was a wise and excellent Person, one of the most honoured and distinguished Characters in all Antiquity; eminent for his Piety, Prudence, and Probity, and therefore greatly respected when alive, and his Memory afterwards had in the highest Esteem and Veneration throughout all the East: whereas according to this Representation he must have been a perfect Madman, one of the wildest and most frantick Enthusiasts that ever lived. His Faith so much celebrated in Scripture was all Frenzy, and he believed not in God, but in the Illusions of his own heated Imagination. How is this consistent with the Account given of him both in the Old Testament and the New? The *Law*, the *Prophets*, our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles* all concur in giving Testimony to *Abraham* as an illustrious Prophet, who had immediate Communication with the Deity, and to whom God was pleased in an extraordinary Manner to reveal and make known his Will. The Reality of God's Appearances to *Abraham*, of the Covenant made with him, and the Promises given

him is every where supposed, and constantly referred to. It lies at the Foundation of all succeeding Revelations. He is honoured both in the Old Testament and in the New, with the glorious Title of the *Friend of God*, Isa. xli. 8. Jam. ii. 23. Our Saviour, whenever he mentions him, does it in such a manner as shews the high Esteem he had for him; and he positively declares, that *Abraham saw his Day and was glad*, which evidently relates to the Promise made to him, that in his *Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*; which was particularly renewed to him on the Occasion we have been now considering. The Apostle *Paul*, for whom this Writer professes a great Respect, frequently takes Notice of the Promises given by God to *Abraham*, and the Covenant made with him, as Things of undoubted Certainty; he often makes mention of him with the most glorious Encomiums, as the most eminent Example of a noble and steady Faith in God to all Generations, the *Father of all the Faithful*; and represents all true Christians as his *Seed, and blessed together with him*. And lastly, with respect to this particular Instance of his offering to sacrifice his Son, this, instead of being represented as a mad Fit of Enthusiasm, only owing to the Frenzy of an over heated Imagination, is mentioned by two inspired Writers *St. Paul*, and *St. James*, as the most illustrious Proof of the Greatness of his Faith and Obedience. The Testimony of the Apostle *Paul* to this Purpose is very remarkable, *Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. By Faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten Son: Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy Seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a Figure.* To which may be added that of *St. James*, which is no less full and express, *Jam. ii. 21, 22, 23. Was not Abraham our Father justified*

by Works when he had offered Isaac his Son upon the Altar? Seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God.

By this time this Writer may see upon what Grounds it is credible and probable to us, that Abraham had not meerly a Belief or Conceit of such a Thing, that is, that he was not meerly a frantick Visionary or Enthusiast, but that he really had such a Command from God, which he imagines none of our present Clergy will undertake to prove.

But our Author has fairly let us know that whatever Proof could be produced for it, he would have no regard to it, since he roundly pronounces that it is impossible to be proved. "That God in this
 " or any other Case should dissolve the Law of
 " Nature, and make it a Man's Duty as a Thing
 " morally reasonable and fit, to act contrary to all
 " the natural Principles and Passions of the human
 " Constitution, is absolutely incredible, and cannot
 " possibly be proved. And upon such a Supposition,
 " I defy all the Clergy in England to
 " prove that there is any such Thing as a Law of
 " Nature, or that any Thing can be just or unjust,
 " just, morally fit or unfit, antecedent to a positive
 " Will. For upon this Principle I think it is
 " evident that nothing can be right or wrong,
 " fit or unfit, in the Reason of Things; but that
 " God may command the most unfit or unrighteous
 " Things by meer arbitrary Will and Pleasure.
 " A Supposition which must unhinge the
 " whole Frame of Nature, and leave no human
 " Creature any Rule of Action at all." And in
 " his great Kindness to the Clergy he supposes this
 " be the Reason, viz. Because it unhinges the whole
 " Frame of Nature, and leaves Men no Rule of Action

tion at all, this " is the Reason that the Hierarchy
 " in all Ages and Countries have been infinitely
 " fond of such a Notion, and have greedily snatched
 " at this Instance, in order to set aside the Law of
 " Nature, and to substitute their own positive Laws
 " in the room of it," p. 133, 134. By the way I
 would observe, that the Apostle *Paul* himself, whom
 this Writer calls the *great Freethinker of his Age*,
 the bold and brave Defender of Reason against Autho-
 rity, p. 74. must be involved in the same Accusa-
 tion of designing to subvert the Law of Nature;
 since, as I have shewn, he highly extols this Action
 of *Abraham* as a glorious Proof of his Faith and
 Obedience to God. So that here we have a Spec-
 imen of our Author's Regard for the Apostles and for
 Christianity, of which we shall have many Instances
 before we have done.

But let us proceed to a more particular Consid-
 eration of what he offers. I will grant him, in as
 strong Terms as he pleases, that there is a *Law of*
Nature, that is, a Law that hath a real and just
 Foundation in the very Nature of Things: and
 that there is right and wrong, fit and unfit in the
 very Nature and Reason of Things; that is, there
 is something in the Nature of Things that makes
 it fit and proper for reasonable Creatures to act after
 such or such a manner, in such and such Circum-
 stances and Relations. Nay farther, I will readily
 own that it is a part of the Law of Nature, or it
 is fit in the Nature of Things, that *Parents* should
 love their *Children* and cherish them, and endeavour
 to preserve their Lives, and to do them good; and
 that it is in the Nature of Things unfit that they
 should do them hurt, and destroy them. But this
 is not to be understood in so extensive a Sense as if
 it admitted no Limitation, and as if in no Case
 whatsoever it could ever be lawful for Parents to
 put their Children to death. I shall not insist on
 the Laws of several Nations, particularly the ancient

Roman Laws, which gave Parents a Power of Life and Death over their own Children; but I believe it will scarce be denied that Cases may happen where it may become the Duty of a Parent, if he be at the same time a Magistrate, to inflict upon his Children a capital Punishment, if their Crimes require it. And *Brutus* was always admired by *Rome* when in its Liberty, for causing his Sons to be scourged and put to Death in his Sight, for endeavouring to betray their Country. In these Instances indeed the Children are supposed to be criminal. But let us put the Case, that a Parent by giving up his own Son to Death, tho' the best deserving in the World, and chargeable with no Crime, could deliver his Country from Slavery and Ruin, the very Law of Nature in such a Case would make it his Duty to control his natural Affection to his own Offspring, and cause it to give way to a superior Law, the Good of the Publick. And as the publick Good is a sufficient Reason for a Man's controlling his private Affection, and acting contrary in some particular Instances to what otherwise would be his Duty in private Relations, so the Command of God, when once it is sufficiently known, in what particular way soever we come to know it, is a good and valid Reason for controlling private Affections and Inclinations.

This Writer himself seems willing to own, that in case God should require such a thing, it would be our Duty to obey; but then he denies that God can require any such thing. He thinks it *absolutely incredible that God should in any case dissolve the Law of Nature, and make it a Man's Duty as a thing morally reasonable and fit to act contrary to all the natural Principles and Passions of the human Constitution.* But it is far from being true, that God can in no Case make it our Duty to act contrary to the natural Principles and Passions of the human Constitution: or that his requiring this would be a dissolving

dissolving the Law of Nature ; at that Rate where are all the noble Duties of *Self-denial* and *Mortification*, which our Saviour so much insists upon? When he urges it as our Duty to be ready to *forsake Father, and Mother, and Houses, and Lands, yea, and our own Lives also for his sake*, and declares that he that *loveth any of these more than him* is not worthy of him ; is not this to oblige us in such particular Instances to contract our natural Appetites and Passions, and the dearest Inclinations and Interests of the Flesh for the sake of Truth and a good Conscience? And this is certainly an Instance of the most exalted Virtue that human Nature is capable of. At least, I believe if the Case were put that a Man was to lose his Life, his Liberty, his Wife and Children, and give them up to Death for the sake of his Country, this would be owned to be illustrious Virtue. However, this I am sure of, that a Man that would have asserted the contrary in *Greece or Rome*, when Learning and Virtue flourished most there, would have been despised and abhorred as the basest and most abject of Men. And any Writer that would have maintained such a thing, would scarce have been thought worthy to live among them. And our Love to God ought certainly to be as strong in us as Love to our Country, yea, and superior too, since we owe more to God than to any Man, or to all Men together. And if to control and over-rule our private natural Affections and Interests in such Cases be no Breach of the Law of Nature, but be rather a glorious Instance of the most eminent and consummate Piety and Virtue, and a fulfilling the noblest and highest Part of that Law, whereby we are obliged to prefer the publick to our own private Good, and to love God above all, and yield the most entire unreserved Subjection and Obedience to him ; then I cannot see how it can be thought unworthy of God, the supreme Governor of the World, who

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has an absolute Dominion over his Creatures, to lay Injunctions upon them in some extraordinary Instances with this very View, to exercise and manifest this noble Disposition, and give it an Opportunity of exerting itself: still taking this along with us, which we may be sure will always be the Case, that however difficult and shocking such a Trial may at present appear to be, yet a wise and good God will take care that it shall be crowned in the Issue with a proportionably higher Reward, and shall upon the whole turn to the Person's own greater Glory and Happiness.

Of this Kind was the Command given to *Abraham* to sacrifice his beloved Son. God did not command him absolutely to *bate* his Son, which would have been a wrong Affection of Mind, and scarce possible to be obeyed. On the contrary, the Command itself went upon the Supposition of his loving him. *Take now thy Son, thine only Son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him up*, Gen. xxii. 2. At the same time that he loved him so tenderly he was to offer him up to God; and it was because he loved him so much that the Trial was so great. It is evident, the proper Design of this Command was for the *Trial* and *Exercise* of his Faith and Virtue; for it appears from the Event that God did not give this Command to *Abraham* with an Intention that he should actually *execute* it, but to give him an Opportunity of shewing the excellent Temper and Disposition of his Mind, the Strength of his Faith and Trust in God, and his entire unre-served Submission to his Authority and Will; in a Word, to discover that exalted Pitch of Piety and Virtue to which he had arrived; by proposing to him one of the most difficult and trying Instances of Obedience that can possibly be conceived. And this the divine Wisdom thought fit to do, in order to exhibit a most illustrious Example to all succeeding Generations, of the mighty Power, and

Force

Force of divine Faith and Love, and how far we should carry our Submission to God, and our Resignation to his Authority and Will : That we must be ready to exercise the most difficult Acts of Self-denial, to which God shall see fit to call us, and to renounce for his Sake those things that are dearest to us here on Earth, and not suffer any private Affections or Interests to come in Competition with the Duty and Subjection we owe to the supreme universal Lord : And that we must exercise an implicit Dependence on his supreme Wisdom, and Faithfulness and Goodness, even where we do not at present see the Reasons of Things, and where all Appearances seem to be contrary, and to put on a dark and discouraging Aspect.

These are noble Dispositions, and some of the most exalted Acts of Homage and Duty which a reasonable Creature can possibly yield to the Supreme Lord of the Universe, the greatest and the best of Beings. And these are some of the admirable Lessons which this Example teacheth us ; and which we may suppose the divine Wisdom had in view, in giving such a Command as this to him who is honoured with the Character of the *Father of the Faithful*. And the answering such valuable and excellent Ends is sufficient to justify the Wisdom and Fitness of this Command ; which taken in this View, appears plainly to have been designed for promoting the *universal Good*, and for exhibiting a glorious and beautiful *Example* to the whole moral World.

But though for such wise and excellent Ends God thought fit to give such a Command, yet it must still be remembered that he did not suffer *Abraham* actually to accomplish it. He did not hinder it till the Moment of Execution, that *Abraham's* Obedience might more fully appear, which was as eminent as if he had actually done it. But then he interposed to prevent it by an extraordinary Voice from

from Heaven. From whence we see the great Wisdom and Goodness of God; that though he would have his Children ready to do the most difficult things when he requires them, yet he would not suffer any thing to be done, even in this most singular and extraordinary Instance, that should countenance the inhuman Practice of sacrificing Children, and that should look like unnatural Cruelty in his Worship.

And now upon the whole, the true Question and the only one in which we are concerned is this, Whether God might not in an extraordinary Instance take this Method of Procedure, for trying the Faith and Obedience of his Servant? I cannot see any thing in this Supposition as now stated that is contrary to the divine Wisdom and Goodness. Doth it follow that because God saw fit in an extraordinary Instance to give this Command to try *Abraham*, though he did not suffer him to accomplish it, that therefore there is no Law of Nature, no such Thing as *right* or *wrong*, *just* or *unjust*, *morally fit* or *unfit*? It is evident there is no Consequence at all in this way of arguing. Indeed if God had published a general Law, declaring that it should be henceforth lawful for Parents to hate, hurt, and destroy their Offspring at Pleasure, and that they should be under no Obligations to love, cherish, and provide for them; this would be a dissolving that part of the Law of Nature. And it might justly be concluded, that such a general Law as this could not possibly proceed from God, or be consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness. But it does not follow that because God who is the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, and hath an absolute Power over the Lives of his Creatures, may in an extraordinary Instance, for wise Ends, command a Parent to take away the Life of his own Child, that therefore all Parents are allowed to hate and destroy their own Offspring, and are freed from any Obligations to love and take care of them. The general Law

is still as much in Force as before, that Parents are obliged to love and cherish their Children, and to use their best Endeavours to preserve their Lives in all Cases, except a particular Case should happen, in which the publick Good or the exprefs Command of God himself should require the contrary. And that general Law must always necessarily in the nature of Things be understood with this Limitation; and whenever this Limitation doth take place in any particular Instance, it doth not at all vacate or dissolve the general Law.

Nor does it follow, as this Author suggests, that on this *Supposition God may command the most unfit or unrighteous Things, by meer arbitrary Will and Pleasure*; if by *unfit and unrighteous Things* he means Things that are unfit and unrighteous for God to do. For the righteous God can never do a thing that is unrighteous: But then that may be fit and righteous for him to do or to require *towards us*, which it would not be fit and righteous for one Man to do or to require *towards another*. For it would be wrong to suppose that God is in all Cases bound by our Laws. His Right and Dominion over us is of a peculiar and *transcendent* Nature, and not to be measured by our scanty Rules, but by what is much superior to them, that is, by what appears to his own *infinite* Mind to be, all things considered, fit and right, and best and properest in the whole. He who has an absolute Right over our Lives and Properties, can whenever he pleases, without Injustice, deprive us of our worldly Substance, or take from one and give to another; he can afflict us and exercise us with Troubles whenever he sees fit for the Trial of our Patience, Submission and Resignation, yea, and can take away the Lives of the most excellent and useful Persons without Injustice; because in this Case he only doeth what he hath a Right to do; whereas in Men it would be unjust to do so, because they have *no Right* to do it, and no such absolute Dominion over one

one another. There are some Things indeed which God cannot command or require of his reasonable Creatures, because they have an inseparable and eternal Malignity, and can in no possible Circumstances of Things ever be fit and right; as, to command a reasonable Creature to *bate* God, to blaspheme him, or renounce him, or to prefer other Things before him. There are other Things which he cannot do, not because he is tied down to the same precise Rules that bind us, but because his own *Wisdom* and *Goodness* will not suffer him to do them. Thus he cannot make an innocent Creature eternally miserable. But there is nothing to hinder but that he may make innocent Creatures undergo great Hardships and Afflictions, and Calamities for a time, for the Trial of their Virtue: Though in such a Case we may justly conclude from his Goodness, that he will abundantly compensate their Sufferings by a glorious Reward. And if God should in an extraordinary Instance require a Parent to offer up his own Child, with an Intention that he should really execute it, which is not the present Case; and should afterwards as a Reward of so difficult and trying an Obedience, raise both Father and Son to a higher Happiness and Felicity, which we may reasonably conclude in such a Case he would do; I can see nothing in such a Procedure that could be proved to be contrary not only to Justice but to Goodness. Because on such a Supposition, as God would do nothing but what he hath a Right to do by virtue of his absolute Dominion over the Lives of his Creatures, so let the Hardship appear never so great for the present, it is designed to be recompensed by a glorious Reward far transcending the Greatness of the Trial; and both Father and Son, instead of having an irreparable Injury done them, would have their final and greatest Happiness secured and promoted upon the whole.



Nor would it follow on this Supposition, as the Author alledges, that God *acts by meer arbitrary Will and Pleasure*; if by that he means unreasonable Will. For God hath always Reasons for his own acting in every Instance; wise and just Reasons obvious to his own infinite Understanding, tho' these Reasons are not always known to us. And particularly in *Abraham's Case*, God did not act by meer arbitrary Will, but for wise Reasons, some of which have been already represented.

As to what he adds, that it would *unbinge the whole Frame of Nature, and leave no human Creature any Rule of Action at all*, there is no just Foundation for this Reflection. It makes no alteration in the general Laws of Nature, or in the Rules of Mens Conduct towards one another, or in the Fitness or Unfitness of the Duties that result from such or such Relations. The Obligations of the paternal and filial Relation are no way altered by it, but are still as strong as ever. All that can be concluded from it is, that though we are to love our Children or Parents, we are to love *God* more, and that we must yield an absolute unreserved Submission to the Supreme Being, and make all private Affections and Interests give way, whenever they happen to come in Competition with the Duty we owe to him. And this is no new Law, but is properly an eminent Branch of the Law of Nature, of immutable Obligation, and which is necessarily founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, and the Relations between God and us. It can never possibly cease to oblige us in any one particular Instance; whereas the Law of our particular Relations may in some particular extraordinary Cases or Circumstances cease to oblige, or give way to higher Obligations, when and there incumbent upon us.

Thus I have largely considered the Case of *Abraham*, because this Writer is pleased to lay so mighty Stress upon it, and because the Authority and

Credit

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Credit of the sacred Writings is very nearly concerned in it, in which *Abraham's* Faith and Obedience in this Instance is highly commended.

C H A P. VI.

The Moral Philosopher's Account of the Original of Sacrifices and of the Priesthood, and of Joseph's first establishing an independent Priesthood in Egypt. The Representation he makes of the Mosaical Priesthood, considered. The Priests had not the Government of the Nation vested in them by that Constitution, nor were they exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law, nor had an Interest separate from and inconsistent with the State. Concerning the Church-Revenues established by the Law of Moses. The particular Manner of providing for the Maintenance of the Priests and Levites accounted for. The Author's Pretence, that it was an insufferable Burden and Impoverishment to the People, and the Cause of their frequent Revoltings to Idolatry, examined. Some Observations concerning the Sacrifices prescribed under the Mosaical Oeconomy. The Author's Objections against them considered. No Sacrifices were to be offered in Cases where civil Penalties were expressly appointed by Law, and why. The atoning Virtue of the Sacrifices supposed to consist in the sprinkling of the Blood. This shewn not to be a priestly Cheat, but appointed for wise Reasons.

I Now return to our Author's Objections against the Law of *Moses*. He frequently shews how angry he is with the Constitutions there made about the Priesthood. And this seems to be one principal Reason of the strange Virulence he every where expresses against that Law.

It is scarce worth while to take notice of the Account he pretends to give of the Original of the Priest-

Priesthood and Sacrifices. He represents Sacrifices as having been originally nothing but Feasts of good Fellowship, *p.* 237. Though how this will agree to Holocausts or whole Burnt-Offerings, which seem to have been the most antient Oblations, see *Gen.* viii. 20. xv. 9, 10, &c. *Job* i. 5. xlii. 8. in which the whole was burnt and consumed to the Honour of God, and no part of it left to the Offerer, is hard to see. But our Author's Design in this seems purely to be to bring in the Priests for the Honour of being the *chief Butlers, Bakers, Butchers, and Cooks*, in these Feasts, for so he represents them. And I suppose he will allow the same Honour to the *Princes, Patriarchs, and great Men*, whilst they continued to *manage the Sacrifices in Person*, as he owns they at first did. His Account of the *Egyptian Priesthood*, and of *Joseph's* erecting them into an Independency on the Crown, though he pretends to give it us for History, is purely of his own Imagination. He would have it thought, that *Joseph* having married the High Priest's Daughter, by his interest obtained a Grant from the King to render their Lands unalienable; because it is said their Land became not *Pharaoh's*, when the rest of the Land of *Egypt* became his, *p.* 239. But it is evident from the Story he himself refers to, that this was owing to their not being under a Necessity to sell their Lands to him as the other *Egyptians* did, to procure Corn for themselves and their Families, having their Portion of Meat assigned them from *Pharaoh*. And the sending them this Allowance is represented as the Act not of *Joseph*, but of *Pharaoh* himself; who in this, probably followed an antient custom, see *Gen.* xlvii. 22—26. As to *Joseph's* marrying the High Priest's Daughter, for so our Author has it, (though *Potipherah*, whose Daughter he married, is not called the *High Priest* but the *Priest of On*): This instead of proving that the Priests owed all their Dignity to *Joseph*, plainly

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shews that they were Persons of great Eminence before, since when *Pharaoh* was doing *Joseph* the greatest Honour, and made him next to himself in Power and Dignity, and Ruler over all the Land of *Egypt*, he gave him a Priest's Daughter to Wife. For this Marriage was evidently of *Pharaoh's* own procuring, *Gen. xli. 45.* And it appeareth from the most antient Accounts we have of the *Egyptians*, that their Priests were Men of great Dignity and Authority, and probably took in all the prime Nobility, and Heads of the most antient and honourable Families. Concerning which see *Shuckford's* sacred and profane History, *Vol. II. p. 120, &c.*

I shall proceed to consider the Account he gives of the Priesthood under the Mosaical Constitution. He tells us, *p. 26.* That "*Moses* constituted a Priesthood, which was to govern the Nation as Prime Ministers, Representatives, and Vicegerents of God, and to drain all the Wealth and Treasures of the Kingdom into the Church, as they must necessarily have done had his Law been strictly executed, *p. 42.* and that the Tribe of *Levi* did not make a sixtieth part of the whole Body, and yet it would be easy to prove that the Church Revenues under this Government amounted to full twenty Shillings in the Pound upon all the Lands of *Israel.*" And then he puts a Question, which would be very proper if the Matter was as he represents it; "How came the People to be reconciled to this? To which he answers in short, that they were never reconciled to it at all. That national established Worship was so prodigiously expensive, and their Clergy or Priests, and Levites, such absolute Masters of their Property, that they took all Occasions to revolt, and were glad to serve any other Gods that would accept them upon easier Terms, *p. 128, 129.* He affirms, that the Levites, though Servants in the Temple, were Courtiers with the King's Liveries

“ and had greater Rights and Immunities than
 “ any Prince or first Magistrate of another Tribe.
 “ *Levi* was a Tribe exempted from the Jurisdiction
 “ of the Law and protected against it, as plainly
 “ appears from the Instance of the drunken Levite
 “ and his Concubine, *p.* 141. and he repeats it
 again in the next Page, that “ this Instance plainly
 “ shews, that there was no Law for Priests and
 “ Levites at that time ;” he goes on to say, *p.*
 142. That “ under the Law of *Moses* the Priests
 “ had an Interest separate from and inconsistent
 “ with the Interest of the State or Society, and that
 “ he looks upon this to be the true State of the
 “ Case under the Mosaical Oeconomy, and by the
 “ essential Constitution of that Law.”

That the Priesthood had the Government of the
 Nation in their Hands according to the Mosaick
 Institution, as this Author suggests, is far from be-
 ing true. *Moses* had the chief Government in his
 own Hands during his Life time, while *Aaron* was
 High Priest : And he did not vest the Government
 after his Decease in *Eleazar* the High Priest, but
 appointed *Joshua*, who was not of the Tribe of *Levi*,
 to succeed him in the Government of the People.
 Afterwards, when the Nation was governed by
Judges for some hundreds of Years, in whom the
 supreme Power resided, they were taken indifferently
 out of every Tribe, as it pleased God to appoint ;
 but not one of them was the High Priest, nor of
 the priestly Order, or of the Tribe of *Levi*, till
Eli and *Samuel* the last of the Judges. They were
 afterwards governed by *Kings* till the *Babylonish*
 Captivity, who had it in their Power to depose the
 High Priest, as *Solomon* did *Abiathar*. In a Word,
 the judging and governing the People is never once
 mentioned in the Law, as properly belonging to the
 High Priest's Office.

The inferior *Judges* that were appointed by *Moses*
 to judge the People, *Exod.* xviii. 20, 21. *Deut.* i.

13, 15. and afterwards the seventy *Elders*, whom God appointed to assist *Moses* in the greater and more difficult Causes, which the inferior Judges were not able to decide, were chosen out of all the Tribes, and not that of *Levi* only, *Numb.* xi. 16, 17, 25. and it is agreed by all the *Jews* that the great *Sanhedrim* or Council, the Supreme Court of Judicature, of whose Power they say such great things, consisted not merely of *Priests* and *Levites*, but of any other Persons of other Tribes that were qualified by their Knowledge of the Law; and *Maimonides* saith, "that even if there was not one Priest or Levite there, it was a lawful Judicatory," "and that the High Priest did not sit there merely by virtue of his Place or Birth, except his Knowledge in the Law was such as fitted him for it." Concerning this, see *Selden de Synedr.* Lib. ii. Cap. 18. §. 1.

And whereas this Writer pretends, that even the *Levites*, though *Servants in the Temple*, had greater Rights and Immunities than any Prince or first Magistrate of another Tribe; and that *Levi* was a Tribe exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law and protected against it; this is entirely false, there are no such Immunities or Exemptions from the Jurisdiction of the Law allowed to *Priests* and *Levites* by the Mosaical Constitution. The Judges are commanded to judge all Persons and Causes without respect of Persons, and to take Criminals even from the Altar, *Exod.* xxi. 14. *If a Man come presumptuously upon his Neighbour to slay him with Guile, thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that he may die* that is, as the most eminent *Jewish* Authors interpret it, though he were a Priest and were then ministering at the Altar, ready to sacrifice, he was to be taken thence: And the *Jerusalem Targum* expressly saith, although it were the High Priest that was then ministering, they were to take him from the Altar and put him to death. And so far is

from being true, that the whole *Tribe of Levi* was exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law, that it is agreed amongst the *Jews*, that even the High Priest himself as well as others was subject to the Jurisdiction even of the lesser Courts ; yea, to the least of them all, the *Tribunal of Three*, in Causes that came before those Courts : And that whether he committed any thing against the Affirmative or Negative Precepts of the Law, he was accounted as one of the common People ; and that in every Cause belonging to him. So the *Gemara Babylon. Tit. Sanbedr.* — See all this fully shewn by the most learned Author above cited *de Synedr.* Lib. ii Cap. 8. §. 1, 3. and Cap. x. §. 6. The Proof this Writer pretends to bring from the Case of the Levite and his Concubine is ridiculous. What the Levite had done contrary to Law, or wherein he was protected against the Jurisdiction of the Law is hard to know. But I suppose because he was a Levite, our Author thinks that not only his Wife should be abused and murdered with Impunity, but he ought to have been punished for complaining of it. Not those that did the Outrage were to be called to an Account for it, but the poor Levite that suffered it. This is the Immunity he seems willing to give the Levites, an Immunity from having common Justice done them, and the Privilege of being injured and outraged with Impunity.

'Tis in the same Strain of Misrepresentation he concludes, that under the Law of *Moses* the Priest had an Interest separate from and inconsistent with the Interest of the State or Society ; and that he looks upon this to be the true State of the Case under the *Mosaic Oeconomy*, and by the essential Constitution of that Law. Under that Oeconomy, as I have already observed, there were no proper ecclesiastical Immunities, if by these be meant the Priests being exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law, and from being judged in the common Courts in all Causes

equally with others. Nor were there any such things strictly speaking as purely *ecclesiastical Judicatories* under that Constitution. Those of other Tribes joined with the Levites in the Judicatories, and even in the greatest of all, the *Sanhedrim* itself, to which the ultimate Appeal lay in all Causes ecclesiastical as well as civil; as *Selden* shews in the Place above quoted. So that the Priests were not a Body separate from and independent of the State, but incorporated with it; except that the peculiar Duties of their Office, as the offering up of Sacrifices, officiating at the Tabernacle or Temple, &c. was to be done by none but themselves. Upon the whole, there was by the essential Constitution of that Law a Harmony between the *civil* and *ecclesiastical* Powers, and accordingly under their best Kings and Governors, when their Law was most strictly observed, and in the most flourishing Times of their State, we find them contributing mutual Assistance and Support to one another.

As to their Church Revenues, if he could prove, as he says he easily could, that they *had full twenty Shillings in the Pound upon all the Lands of Israel*, he might justly say that they *drained all the Treasures of the Kingdom into the Church*. But such a wild Assertion as this deserves no Answer, and only shews that this Writer throws out any thing at random, by which he may vent his Spleen against the *Priests*, without being at all solicitous whether it be agreeable to Truth or Decency.

He remarks, that the Tribe of Levi was but a *sixtieth part of the People*; and it will be easily granted that when they were first numbred in the Wilderness they were but few in Proportion to the rest of the People; but as the Nation was divided into a certain Number of Tribes, and the Levites were one whole Tribe, it was but just that in the general Division they should be considered and provided for as such; and that when the Method of

their Subsistence and Maintenance was settled for all succeeding Generations, Regard should be had not only to their present Number, which then happened to be far smaller than that of any other Tribe, but to what it might prove afterwards: For the Numbers of Persons in the same Tribe often differed mightily at different Times; and particularly in the Tribe of *Levi* we find it sometimes bearing a much greater Proportion to the Number of the People, than it did at their being first numbred in the Wilderness.

But methinks this Writer, who seems to have such frightful Notions of a landed Clergy, and who makes their having a large Share of unalienable Lands vested in them, the chief Source of the great Ascendant they obtained both over Kings and People, should have more favourable Thoughts of the Priesthood established by the Mosack Constitution, since they were so far from having a third part of the Lands of *Canaan* in their Possession, as *Diodorus* tells us, * the Priests had a third of the whole Land of Egypt, that they had not properly speaking any Lands settled upon them at all by the original Constitution of that Law, except that there were Cities assigned them in the several Tribes to dwell in with Lands round them, which were not to extend to above a thousand Cubits, for their Accommodation in their Dwellings. But the Tribe of *Levi* had no Inheritance in the Land assigned them, when the rest of the Tribes had theirs. This is often repeated in the Law, and that it should be a Statute for ever throughout their Generations, Numb. xviii. 20, 23, 24. *Dent.* x. 9. If therefore there had not been a liberal Provision made for them otherwise, their Condition would have been much worse than any of the other Tribes, which God did not think fit to suffer, as they were more immediately to attend his

* *Diod. Sicul. Lib. i.*

Service in the *Tabernacle* or *Temple* ; and were designed to teach and instruct the People. For that this whole Tribe was particularly designed to instruct the People in the Law, is evident from many Passages, particularly *Lev. x. 2. Deut. xxxiii. 10. 2 Chron. xvii. 7, 8. xxx. 22. Neb. viii. 7, 9. Mal. ii. 4—7.* And to engage them to be more diligent and careful in instructing the People in the right Knowledge of the Law, may be probably supposed to have been one Reason of the particular manner of their Maintenance prescribed under that Constitution. For it is evident that the Subsistence of the *Levites*, but especially of the *Priests*, very much depended on the People's close Observance of the Law of *Moses*, without a pretty good Acquaintance with which, they could not be so exact in bringing the Oblations in the several Cases and Occasions there prescribed. So that this made it to be the Interest of the *Priests* and *Levites* themselves, that the People should not be ignorant of that Law. It also tended to make them more diligent in their own Offices, and in observing the Laws and Constitutions of the publick Worship at the *Tabernacle* or *Temple*, from which their Subsistence in a great Measure arose. And besides, in this Method of providing for them the People had a better Opportunity given them of shewing their Readiness and good Will, than if they had had large independent Settlements in Land : And indeed *Philo* † tells us, concerning many of the *Jews* in his time, speaking of the first Fruits, &c. belonging to the *Priests*, that *they prevented the demanding of them, and paid them even before they were due, and as if they had rather been receiving a Benefit than giving any ; and that both Sexes brought them in with such a Readiness and Alacrity, and studious Zeal, as is beyond Expression.*

† Cited by *Selden*, *History of Tithes. Review, Chap. ii.*

It comes in very properly to be observed here, that several things which are looked upon as mightily contributing to promote the Power and Wealth of the Priests, had no place at all in the Mosaick Constitution. This Writer observes that, when once the *Egyptian* Priests had obtained such an Ascendant in that Country, *Egypt became the Parent and Patroness of new Gods; for every new God brought a new Revenue to the Priests.* And it is observed by a noble Writer, that in the *early Days of this ancient priestly Nation, it was thought expedient for the Increase of Devotion, to enlarge their Systems of Deity, and to multiply their revealed Objects of Worship, and raise new Personages of Divinity in their Religion.* And he supposes the vast number of their Gods and of their Temples in *Egypt*, to be the Contrivance of their Priests for the Increase of their own Power and Riches. And among the many Methods for advancing the Interests of the Priesthood, he particularly reckons the having *new Modes of Worship, new Heroes, Saints, Divinities, which serve as new Occasions for sacred Donatives* *. Now it is undeniably evident that there was no Place for any of these things in the Law of *Moses*: No *new Modes of Worship, no new Divinities* allowed, no Worship of *Saints and Heroes*, no Variety of Temples. As there was but one God to be worshipped, the only living and true God, so there was but one Sanctuary or Temple allowed at which all their Sacrifices were to be offered. So that many of these things, which are represented as mighty Sources of priestly Wealth and Power, were not at all admitted under that Constitution.

But yet as it pleased God for wise Ends to chuse out a Nation to himself to be erected into a peculiar Polity, whose very Constitution was founded in the Acknowledgment and Worship of that one true

* *Characteristicks, Vol. III. p. 43, 44, 49, 50.*

God, at the same time that the whole World about them was overspread with *Idolatry*; and as it pleased him to appoint that there should be a great deal of pompous Ceremony in his Worship; without which, as the Temper of the World was, it would probably have been neglected and disregarded, and the People apt to revolt to the pompous and splendid Idolatries of their neighbouring Countries: so he saw it fit that those that were to be employed as Priests and Ministers in his immediate Worship and Service, should be handsomely provided for; without which, in those Circumstances of things, they would have been in Danger of falling into Contempt, and have lain under a greater Temptation to set about inventing new Modes of Worship, new Temples, Deities, and Altars. 'Tis certain that in all other Countries in those early Ages the Persons officiating in the sacred Rites and Ceremonies were of considerable Rank and Figure; and it did not seem fit that among that People which above all others peculiarly made Profession of worshipping the one true God, those that were set apart to the immediate Service and Worship of the God of Heaven and Earth, should be in a mean and indigent Condition.

But tho' the Provision made for the Priests and Levites by *Tithes*, *First-Fruits*, *Oblations* and other Dues settled on them by that Law, was sufficient to give them a handsome Subsistence, supposing them regularly paid *; yet it has been greatly magnified by some, tho' never so unreasonably by any as by

* Yet it must be owned, that this Method of Maintenance, tho' chosen, as I have already hinted, for wise Ends, was much more precarious than if they had had rich independent Revenues in Land settled on them. And tho' many of the People, and the best of them, rendered those Dues cheerfully, yet not doubt they often suffered thro' the Ill-will or Avarice of others: and to make amends for what they must almost unavoidably suffer in this way, we may well suppose to be one Reason why their Allowance was made large, and to arise from various Things.

this

this Author; and to swell the Account, they have thrown in the *second Tythe*, as if this also belonged peculiarly to the Levites; and yet by the express Direction of the Law it was to be spent by the Owners in entertaining themselves, and their Households, their Men-servants and Maid-servants, that they might all rejoice together in the Place which the Lord should choose. Therefore it is usually called by the Jews the *Owner's Tythe*; and the Levites were admitted to partake of these Entertainments. And every third Year it was to be spent at their own Places of Abode, and more peculiarly designed for the Entertainment and Benefit of the *Poor*, the *Stranger*, the *Widow*, and the *Fatherless*. And therefore it is usually called by the Jews the *poor Man's Tythe*. These Things were designed under that Constitution for maintaining and enlarging mutual Benevolence, and brotherly Love and Charity. And notwithstanding the Complaints this Writer makes of the Impoverishment and insufferable Burdens laid upon that People, yet in Fact it appears from the whole History of their Nation, that they were never so happy and flourishing at home, and so much respected abroad, as when they kept close to the Observance of their Law. Their chearful Obedience was fully compensated by Blessings poured forth upon them in great Abundance, as it had been expressly promised them in that Covenant. 'Tis certain their greatest and best Men always looked upon the Law of *Moses* as their special Privilege and Advantage, whereby they were gloriously distinguished above other Nations, which they would never have done if they had looked upon it to have been such a miserable, enslaving, impoverishing Constitution as this Author represents it. Nor do I find they made any grievous Complaints about the Maintenance provided for the Priests and Levites. *Solomon*, who was a very wise Man, and a great King, gives it as his Advice, *Prov. iii. 9, 10*

Honour

Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the First-Fruits of thine Increase [which were appointed by the Law to be given to the Priests] *so shall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Presses shall burst with new Wine.* From whence it appears, that he was far from being of Opinion that they would be impoverished and ruined, by what they liberally and chearfully expended in Obedience to the Law. And the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*, of whose Wisdom this Writer seems to express a good Opinion, p. 418. adviseth to *honour the Priest, and give him his Portion, as it is commanded, the First-Fruits, and the Trespass-Offering, &c.* Chap. vii. 31.

Our Author indeed takes upon him to pronounce that the *Jews* were never reconciled to this at all; and he is pleased to charge all their Idolatries to the Account of it. “ Their national established Worship was so prodigiously expensive, and their “ Clergy or Priests and Levites, such absolute “ Masters of their Property [one would think by his Representation, that they had all the Lands of *Israel* in their Possession] “ that they took all “ Occasions to revolt, and were glad to serve any “ other Gods that would accept them upon easier “ Terms.” Thus he hath found out a good Excuse for the frequent Idolatries of the *Jews*. At other times he charges this Conduct on the gross Stupidity, and constitutional national Blindness of that wretched Egyptianized People: But here he is pleased to pity the poor People, and lays the Blame of all upon their Law, which laid such a Burden upon them, that it was impossible for them to live under it. There is as much Foundation for this as for many others of this Author’s Reflections. But how comes it that the *Jews* themselves never pretended this as a Reason, or at least an Excuse for their Revolts? The Truth is, if this was the Reason of their going over to the idolatrous Worship of the neighbouring Nations, they would not have

have gained much by the Change. The Priests in other Countries were of great Power and Influence, and it appears by the most antient Accounts, that the publick Worship and Ceremonies of Religion were vastly expensive, and their Sacrifices such as could not be maintained and performed but at a very great Charge*. And besides, we find the *Jews* in their most degenerate Times were often willing enough to offer *Multitudes* of Sacrifices to the Lord, and to other Gods too; which one should think would rather have added to their Expences than diminished them. The Truth of the Matter is, it was not their being oppressed by the Priests, and reduced to Poverty by the Expensiveness of their Publick Worship that drove them into Idolatry: but it was usually in a time of Peace and Plenty, and when they began to grow *rich* that they forgot the Lord, see *Deut.* xxxi. 20, 21. xxxii. 15. This brought on a Corruption and Dissoluteness of Manners, which produced a Neglect of Religion, and a Conformity to the idolatrous Customs of the neighbouring Nations. Nor need we go any farther to account for this, than the Corruption of the human Nature, and that strange Proneness that hath appeared in Mankind in all Ages (the wisest Nations not excepted) to Superstition and false Worship, and to imitate the ill Customs of others, especially when they were such as tended to the Gratification of vicious Inclinations and Appetites. And of this Kind were many of the Rites performed to the heathen *Deities*. But with regard to the *Jews*, this is certain, that their revolting from the Religion and Worship prescribed in their Law, was usually followed with great Calamities. And when they were reduced to Affliction and Distress, this brought them to serious Reflections upon their Guilt and Folly. They then sought unto the Lord,

* See *Shuckford's sacred and profane History*, Vol. 2. p. 209. and

and were glad to return to the Observance of his Law, sensible not only that it was their Duty, but that their Happiness depended upon it.

Here it may not be improper to take Notice of the Objections raised by this Writer against the Law of *Moses*, on the Account of the Constitutions there made concerning *expiatory Sacrifices*, which he represents as most absurd and unreasonable, and as a gross Fallacy and Imposition upon the common Sense and Understanding of Men. But before I enter on a particular Consideration of his Objections, it is proper to observe, that *Sacrifices* were not first originally appointed in the Law of *Moses*; they had been in use long before. The first Act of Religion that we read of after the Fall, was the offering of *Sacrifice*. And it is probable, that it was originally of divine Appointment, and communicated to our first Parents, together with the original Promise, both to keep alive upon the Minds of Men, a Sense of the Evil of Sin, and God's just Displeasure against it, and to be a visible Pledge of his pardoning Mercy. It was an Act of Religion that soon spread universally among all Nations, and scarce any other Account can be given of its having so early and universally obtained, but that it was derived by a Tradition from the first Parents and Progenitors of the human Race, who recommended it to their Posterity as a Rite of Religion acceptable to God, and which he himself had appointed. Afterwards, when Men fell off from the Worship of the only true God to Idols, they offered *Sacrifices* to them as well as Prayers and other Acts of divine Worship. This was the State of Things when the Law of *Moses* was given. *Sacrifices* were every where offered, tho' for the most part to Idols. In that Law God prescribed *Sacrifices* to be offered to his divine Majesty, as they had been by good Men before, probably by his own Appointment, and strictly prohibited the offering

them

them to any other. Many particular Regulations were made, and Orders given relating to those Sacrifices. And in order to prevent their falling into the idolatrous Usages of the neighbouring Nations, they were forbidden to offer any other Sacrifices, or with any other Rites than were there expressly prescribed: Some of which Rites probably had been derived from the ancient *Patriarchs*, others were then first instituted in *opposition* to the Rites of the idolatrous Nations, and to preserve the *Israelites* from a Conformity to them. These Rites and Ordinances relating to Sacrifices were wrought into the Mosaick Constitution, and so ordered by divine Wisdom as among other Ends and Uses to be the *Types* and *Shadows* of good Things to come, under a more perfect Dispensation, to which that was designed to be subservient, and in which all these Sacrifices were to be entirely superseded by an Oblation of a far superior Nature, and of infinitely greater Virtue.

But let us now consider the Attempt our Author makes to expose the Ordinances of the Law of *Moses* relating to expiatory Sacrifices. He observes, that there could be no Commutation or Exchange of Punishment under the Law as a Favour or Matter of Grace from any of those Sacrifices. The Penalty, whatever it was, supposing the Offence proved, must be executed as the Law enjoined, and there could be no such Thing as any Pardon under that Constitution. In all capital Cases, the Offender upon legal Proof or Conviction must die the Death, and no Sacrifice could exempt him. And in all Cases where the Law had not provided Death, but some pecuniary Mulec or personal Labour and Servitude upon Non-payment, this Penalty was to be strictly executed, and none could plead any Privilege or Exemption by Sacrifice. And he thinks he may venture to say universally, that

“ no

“ no other Penalty, of what Nature or Kind soever,
 “ was ever taken off, or mitigated on the Account
 “ of Sacrifice. He observes farther, that the Per-
 “ sons entitled to this Atonement were supposed to
 “ be guilty of no Fault after they had satisfied the
 “ Law in making their Offering, or paying their
 “ Fine, which if they had not done, no Atonement
 “ could be accepted. And therefore he concludes,
 “ that the making the Atonement or Virtue of these
 “ Sacrifices to consist only and absolutely in the
 “ Priest’s sprinkling the sacrificial Blood, as was
 “ done under that amazing Constitution, as he calls
 “ it, was nothing else but a priestly Cheat, and gross
 “ Imposition *, p. 126, 127, 128.

To clear this Matter I shall offer some Observations that may give some Light into the Mosaicall Constitutions about Sacrifices, and may serve to obviate our Author’s Exceptions:

First, Under that Constitution there were no Sacrifices prescribed at all for those Crimes against which *Death* was denounced, or any particular Penalties appointed by Law. And there is very good Reason for this. If the offering Sacrifices had in such Cases exempted Persons that were legally convicted of those Crimes from the legal Obligation to Punishment, it would have had a very bad Effect on the *Publick*. And if Persons could have escaped Punishments for the greatest Crimes meerly on their offering Sacrifices, this Constitution would have been much more inveighed against, and with much more Reason, as inconsistent with the Preservation of civil Order, and the Good of Society, and as dispensing with and vacating all the Laws of the Commonwealth. Where therefore it was judged

* As to the Use he makes of some of these Assertions against the Doctrine of Christ’s Satisfaction, the proper Place for considering this, will be when we examine his Exceptions against that Doctrine.

necessary

necessary for the Good of the Community, that the Penalties should be actually inflicted on Persons guilty of such Crimes, in these Cases *no* Sacrifices were appointed. Because as Sacrifices were supposed to obtain Pardon, and to avert the Punishment that was due for the Crime on the Account of which they were offered, it was not proper to appoint Sacrifices by Law for Crimes which it was thought necessary for the publick Good to punish.

Another Remark I would make with regard to these expiatory Sacrifices is, that in Cases where Sacrifices were appointed to be offered, they were never supposed to be of any Avail, or to intitle a Person to Pardon without *Repentance*, which if they had been supposed to have done, this Constitution would have had a very bad Influence on *Religion*: hence in the Sacrifices that were to be offered for any Sin or Fault, the Person that had offended was obliged to lay *his Hand upon the Head of the Victim*, and to *confess his Sins*, especially that particular Sin on the Account of which the Sacrifice was offered, and to declare his Repentance for it, as appears from *Lev. v. 5.* And in cases where Persons had done any *Damage* to their Neighbour, they were not only to confess it, but to make *Restitution* of what they had wrongfully taken. And it is a general Rule, that Sacrifices were never ordered, but in Cases where the Offender was supposed to be penitent. When a Person had sinned through *Ignorance*, and came afterwards to be sensible of it; or if he had sinned knowingly and wilfully, and afterwards was brought to a true *Repentance*, and of his own Accord acknowledged it, when it could not be proved against him; in such Cases as these Sacrifices were to be offered, as may be seen in the Laws about the Sin-Offering and the Trespass-Offering, *Lev. Chap. iv, v, vi.* But in case of obstinate Impenitency and presumptuous Sinning with a *bigb Hand*, no Sacrifices

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Sacrifices were admitted. From whence it appears, that the legal Sacrifices were not designed to draw Men off from real substantial Piety and Righteousness, or to serve instead of it, but rather supposed the absolute Necessity of Repentance in order to Forgiveness, and that no Pardon could be expected without it.

Another Thing that it is proper to observe with regard to the expiatory Sacrifices under the Law, is, that the atoning Virtue of those Sacrifices was supposed principally to consist in the Blood of the Victim, which was *shed and sprinkled* on or towards the Altar. And this is what our Author cries out against as a Priestly Cheat and gross Imposition: he would fain know what *Atonements or Propitiations could signify under a Law that admitted no Pardon*? If by saying that the Law *admitted no Pardon*, he means, that where the Law denounced any particular Penalty against a particular Crime, the Law itself did not appoint that Penalty to be remitted, which it appointed to be inflicted for that Crime, it is very true. And to suppose the contrary would be very absurd. For no Law dispenses with the Penalty which that Law expressly enjoins: And therefore it was, that in Cases where the Mosaical Law expressly appointed particular Penalties for particular Crimes, no Sacrifice was admitted, because the Law did not intend the Penalties should be dispensed with in these Cases. But if by saying *that Law admitted no Pardon*, he intends that there was no such thing as Pardon or Remission of Sins at all under that Constitution, it is a great Mistake, for the very Appointment of expiatory Sacrifices shews, there was Pardon under that Constitution, and necessarily supposes it. For in Cases where Sacrifices were appointed to be offered it is expressly declared, that upon a Man's confessing his Fault, and offering the Sacrifice, *the Sin which he had committed should be forgiven him*.

But still it is urged, that this was only a priestly Cheat

Cheat, since really nothing was forgiven, and he was freed from no Penalty on the Account of the Sacrifice: But how doth this Writer prove that he was freed from no Penalty on the Account of the Sacrifice? 'Tis certain that in Cases where Sacrifices were appointed to be offered for any Crime, the Man that offended was not subjected by Law to any Penalty for that Crime, as he was with regard to Crimes for which Sacrifices were not appointed to be offered. For which this Reason is to be given, that the Sacrifice was supposed to *avert* the Penalty, and therefore Sacrifices were not suffered to be offered in Cases where it was necessary for the Good of the Community, that the Penalty should be actually inflicted. Thus, *e.g.* in Cases of stealing or defrauding, if the Thief was taken and legally convicted, he was to *restore double*, if the Ox, or Ass, or Sheep which he had taken was found alive with him; but if he had killed or sold it, he was to *restore four or five fold*; and if he could not do this he was to be *sold*, *Exod. xxii. 1, 2, 3.* And in such Cases no Sacrifice was appointed at all: because it was intended, and was judged necessary for the Good of the Publick, that the Penalty should be actually executed. But if a Man had taken any thing wrongfully from his Neighbour, and had even sworn falsely concerning it, and could not be legally convicted, or the Crime proved upon him, if afterwards he sincerely repented of his Crime, and came of himself and acknowledged his Guilt, in that Case he was appointed to bring a Sacrifice; and then the Penalty which was appointed in the other Case was not to be inflicted on him. He was obliged only to restore the Principal, and add a *fifth* Part thereto, which was no more than was proper to make amends to the Owner for the Damage he might have sustained in being for some time without the Use of what had been taken from him, *Lev. vi. 2.* And this was not properly a *Mult*

or Penalty, but a just *Restitution*, which was necessary to shew the Sincerity of the Repentance he professed for his Crime. So that we see that in Cases where the Mulct or Penalty was actually insisted on by Law, Sacrifices were not appointed to be offered; and where the Sacrifices were appointed to be offered, the Mulct or Penalty, which would have been otherwise due, was to be remitted. And by this we may see how true it is which he ventures to pronounce *universally*, that *no other Penalty of what Nature or Kind soever was ever taken off or mitigated on the account of Sacrifice.*

But perhaps it will be said, that in these Cases the Sacrifices themselves were the Penalty required by Law. He tells us, *that in innumerable Cases of Accident or Inadvertency, which was made penal by the Law, the Sacrifice as a Deodand or Fine to the Church was the whole Penalty. And where a Sacrifice was ordered with a pecuniary Mulct, one part of the Fine was due to the State, and the other to the Church.* But Sacrifices were offered in many Cases that were not owing merely to Inadvertency, but where the Sin had been deliberate and wilful, tho' afterwards sincerely repented of, as is evident from the Instances mentioned, *Lev. vi. 2, 3.* And in these Cases it is manifest that the Sacrifice was not regarded or prescribed as a Punishment, but as a Means to free the Offender from Punishment; and the Reason why no Punishment was enjoined where Sacrifices were ordered, was not because the Sacrifice itself was a Punishment, but because the Sacrifice was supposed to free the Person in the Eye of the Law from the Guilt he had contracted, and thereby avert the Punishment to which otherwise he must have been obnoxious. As to his Insinuation that the Sacrifice was only a *Fine to the Church*, one should think, if this had been the Case, they would have been allowed to commute the Sacrifice for Money, which yet was never admitted. And

whereas

whereas he adds, that *where a Sacrifice was ordered with a pecuniary Muleſt, one part of the Fine was due to the State, and the other to the Church*; he would have done well to have told us what Sacrifices were ordered with pecuniary Muleſts. In Cases where Muleſts were ordered by Law, which was only where a real Damage had been done by any Man to his Neighbour, the *Muleſt* or *Fine*, if he will call it so, was to be paid to the *injured* Person himself, and not either to *the State, or to the Church*: nor was the Priest to have any Share in it at all, except in Cases where the Priest himself happened to be the Person that had suffered the Damage. Instances of this we have with regard to the *Thief* that was obliged to restore double to the Person whom he had injured, and if the Thing he had stolen was sold or destroyed, *four or five fold*; and if he could not do this, he was to be *sold* by him whom he had wronged. And in case of a Man's accusing a *Virgin* wrongfully, or in case of deflowering a *Virgin* unbetrothed, the Law appointed a Fine or Sum of Money to be paid to her Father, besides the Satisfaction that was to be made to the Damsel herself, *Deut. xxii. 18, 19, 29*. And in these Cases, where there were penal Muleſts appointed by Law, there were no Sacrifices admitted: and on the other hand, in Cases where Sacrifices were prescribed, there was no Muleſt appointed.

But he farther urges, to shew that the making the Atonement to consist in the Priest's sprinkling the sacrificial Blood was a *gross Fallacy and Imposition*; that the Persons entitled to this Atonement, were supposed to be guilty of no Fault after they had satisfied the Law in making their Offering, or paying of their Fine, which if they had not done no Atonement could be accepted. And that this therefore was taking out a Pardon after the Debt had been paid, and the Law satisfied, and owning an infinite Obligation to the Priests, for cheating them out of their Money,

and their Substance, p. 128. The Sting of this Sneer lies here. That before the Blood was sprinkled the Law was satisfied, and the Person supposed to be guilty of no Fault, and therefore it was an Imposition to pretend that the sprinkling of the Blood made an Atonement for him. But this is misrepresented: for the Law was not *satisfied*, nor was the Offering properly *made*, or compleated, till the Blood was *sprinkled*. Till that was done the Person was still supposed to lie under his Guilt, and was not clear in the Eye of the Law. And as the Sacrifice could not be of any Avail without *Confession* and *Restitution*, which was supposed to be a necessary Qualification for Forgiveness, so in Cases where Sacrifices were prescribed, tho' a Man had made Restitution, he was not regarded as free from his Guilt till the *Sacrifice* was offered, and the Atonement made by the Blood. Restitution did indeed repair the Injury offered to his Neighbour, but still there was a Guilt cleaving to him on Account of the Transgression he had been guilty of against God, Expiation therefore was to be made for the Offence committed against the *Divine Majesty*. And in order to this, the Blood of the Sacrifice was required to be offered unto God. And the Reason that is given why the Blood was supposed to *make Atonement for the Soul*, is this, that the *Life of the Flesh is in the Blood*, Lev. xvii. 2. So that the Atonement consisted in this, that the Life of the *Victim* was given for the *Offender*; and the sprinkling of the Blood upon the Altar was an offering or rendering the Blood or Life of the Victim unto God. This was to put them in Mind, that in strictness they had *deserved* Death at the Hand of God, and he should deal with them in a way of rigorous Justice; since every Transgression and Disobedience exposed them to the Curse that was denounced in the Law against every one that continued not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.

them: But yet that he would graciously pardon them, and accept an Atonement for them; and accordingly when this was offered, the Person that had offended was legally clean and free from the Guilt and Curse he had contracted, and not before.

As to the general Reasons of this Constitution, it was a visible Pledge of God's *pardoning Mercy* to penitent Sinners, and at the same time it tended to preserve in their Mind a lively Sense of his *Justice* and Purity, and of the *Evil* of Sin, and to make them sensible, what it deserved if God should enter into strict Judgment with them: since besides Repentance and Amendment the shedding of the Blood of the Sacrifice for them was required in order to the Expiation of their Guilt. And Sacrifices were insisted on even with regard to Sins of *Ignorance* and Inadvertency, that they might be afraid of all Sin when they found that the least Sin was not to be passed by without some Marks of God's Displeasure against it, and might be rendered cautious and *vigilant* over themselves and their own Conduct, since even Ignorance and Inadvertency or Rashness, which is the Cause of many Faults, should not totally excuse for a Violation of the Law: but when once it came to be known, they were to confess it before God, to humble themselves on the Account of it, and to seek Expiation for it by the Blood of the Sacrifice. Lastly, supposing that God had from the Beginning formed the wise and gracious Design to send his own Son into the World in the Fulness of Time to take upon him our Nature, and to shed his Blood as a Propitiation for the Sins of the World; and that this was the Way in which he had appointed to confer Salvation on guilty Mankind; that so he might declare his Righteousness in the Remission of Sins, and vindicate the Authority of his Government and Laws even in the very Methods of Reconciliation: taking in this View of Things,

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Things, it was very proper to institute and appoint Sacrifices, the better to *prepare* the World for receiving that Method of Redemption through the Blood and Sacrifice of his Son, and to *typify* and prefigure the true Atonement. And upon this State of the Case, the Propriety of this Constitution of Sacrifices, and the comprehensive Views the Divine Wisdom had in it, do more fully appear.

Thus it appears, that there were great and wise Ends in this Institution of Sacrifices, and at the same time care was taken that they should be managed so as not at all to interfere with the civil Laws, or to be any way detrimental to the Society, by derogating from the Justice and Publick Order necessary for the Preservation of the Commonwealth.

C H A P. VII.

His Pretence that the Law of Moses made no Distinction between Morals and Rituals, and never urged Things as in themselves fit and reasonable; and that the Stories of the Miracles recorded there were the Cause of the Jews Obduracy and Impenitency throughout all their Generations. His bitter Invectives against the Jews, and the strange Representation he makes of that People, with a View to cast a Reproach upon their Law. It is shewn that by the Advantage of their Law, they far exceeded all other Nations in the Knowledge of Religion, and that they were famed for Wisdom even among the Heathens. The proper Use that should be made of the Accounts given us of their Faults, and of the Punishments inflicted on them.

WE have not yet done with this Writer's Objections against the Law of Moses, with a View to expose that Law and the Jews. He tells

us, p. 271, That "*Moses* gave them a Law, not
" as a Law or Religion of Nature, but as the im-
" mediate Voice and positive Will of God, the
" Grounds or Reasons of which they were never to
" examine or inquire into, nor to look upon it
" either as founded in the eternal immutable Fit-
" ness of Things, or the Result of any human Rea-
" son or Prudence; and having this Opinion of
" their Law in general, they made no Distinction
" between Morals and Rituals, between eternal and
" immutable, and temporary and mutable Obli-
" gations, or between the Laws of Nature, and
" the perfect Reverse of them." And he had ob-
served before, that " they would believe nothing
" as necessarily and eternally true in Nature and
" Reason, but depended for the Proof of every
" thing upon Miracles, Prodigies, &c. And that
" they had really no such thing among them as a
" Notion of what is Right or Wrong in Morality,"

p. 256.
It will be easily granted that *Moses* represents the
Law he gives as enjoined by the immediate *Autho-
rity* and Will of God himself. And I suppose
none will deny but that this must give a mighty
Force and Efficacy to Laws however fit or reason-
able in themselves. And I believe every considering
Person will allow that in a divine Law it is not
necessary to enter into the particular Reasons of all
the Commands that are given, or to deduce them
by a Chain of *Philosophical* Reasonings from what
this Writer calls the eternal *Fitness* of Things. But
if he means to insinuate, as seems plainly to be his
Intention, that in the Law of *Moses* things are never
urged upon the People as in themselves fit and
reasonable, nor the Grounds and Reasons of the
Law ever set before them, nothing can be more false,
as is evident to any one that is in the least acquaint-
ed with that Law. They are not urged to Obe-
dience from a meer Regard to the *Authority* of God
who

who gave them those Laws, but they are frequently urged to it from the Consideration of his great Goodness; and the Reasonableness and *Fitness* of the thing required of them is often signified in the most expressive and comprehensive Manner, with admirable Fullness as well as Brevity. It were easy to produce a considerable Number of Instances out of the Books of *Moses*, in which the Reasons of the Law are clearly set forth along with the Laws themselves, and that both with regard to moral and ritual Precepts. It is true, that *Moses* never talks of the *eternal Reason* and *immutable Fitness* of Things; nor does the Gospel, tho' it so evidently tends to give us good and excellent Notions of pure and refined Morality, ever expresses itself after this Manner. And I apprehend this way of Expression will scarce be thought necessary for enlightning the Understandings of the People in the Knowledge of *Morals*; especially in the crude and confused Manner in which this Author and some others use it. But it is evident that *Moses* often teaches the People to regard his Laws as founded in Reason, and Righteousness, and Equity, and commendable for their Wisdom and Excellency. Thus Deut. iv. 6, 7, 8: *What Nation is there so great which hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I set before you this Day? Keep, and do them, for this is your Wisdom and Understanding.* And he there supposes the Excellency of their Laws to be so manifest, that other Nations that should hear and observe them would be ready to say, surely this great Nation is a wise and understanding People. He frequently tells them that the Statutes and Commandments which God required them to obey, were for their own Good, Deut. xxvi. 24. x. 13. And it is certain in Fact, that the greatest and wisest Men among the *Jews*, and indeed the People in general, had a very high Opinion of the Wisdom, the Goodness, the Equity, and Reasonableness

ness of their Laws. So far is it from being true which this Author confidently alledges, that they did not regard the *moral Law or Statutes and Judgments delivered by Moses in the Name of God, as true and right, in Nature and Reason.* The noble Account given of the Law, *Psal. xix. 7—12.* to which might easily be added many other Passages celebrating the Righteousness, the Purity, the Loveliness of the Laws enjoined them, sufficiently shew what were the Sentiments of all wise and good Men among the *Jews* on this Head.

And indeed, this Writer himself elsewhere thinks fit to own, that “the Lawgiver himself [*Moses*] directed the People to the right Motive and Principle of Action, *i. e.* to the inward Love of God and their Neighbour, as the principal Thing that would be regarded in the Sight of God,” *p. 34.* And, that “this was all along understood and insisted on during the legal Oeconomy as necessary to a State of true Religion and Virtue, as might be proved by innumerable Testimonies out of the Law and the Prophets. And that even in our Saviour’s Time, the *Jews* from the highest to the lowest owned the Obligation of it, and could not stifle their Convictions of it, how much soever they had lost or neglected the Practice. Their most learned Men, and Christ’s greatest Enemies, allowed, that to love God above all, and our Neighbour as our selves, was the Sum and Substance, the End and Design of the whole Law,” *p. 34.* And how this is consistent with his asserting that the *Jews* made no Distinction between *Morals* and *Rituals*, and between the *Laws of Nature*, and the *perfect Reverse of them*; and that they had no such Thing among them as a *Notion of what is Right or Wrong in Morality*, is hard to conceive.

It is with equal Justice and Consistency that he represents the old Stories they had among them of their
mira-

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miraculous Deliverances and Successes at the first Institution of their Covenant, as having been the chief Occasion of their natural Blindness, Obduracy, and Impenitency in all their succeeding Generations, and of their depending on continual Miracles, which he calls the most dangerous Presumption, and the strongest Hold of Ignorance and Error, p. 263, 264. At other times he is pleased to ascribe this to what he calls the incurable Egyptian Temper of that People, which they at first contracted in Egypt, and could never afterwards shake off; but here he directly charges their Impenitency and Obstinacy in all succeeding Generations on the *miraculous Things* that were done for them to deliver them out of Egypt; so that as he there expresseth it, *they had no great Reason to boast of their Deliverance.* But how those *old Stories*, as he calls them, should have an Influence to render them ever afterwards obdurate and impenitent, is hard to conceive. The natural Tendency of them when firmly believed, was to fill them with *adoring Thoughts* of the divine Power and Majesty, and with a *thankful Sense* of their Obligations to his Goodness, and to ingage them to a more diligent and careful Obedience to those Laws which came to them confirmed with such illustrious Attestations. And it is for such Purposes as these that they are frequently mentioned by good Men of old in their admirable *Psalms* and *Hymns* of Praise. But there is nothing in them to encourage them to expect any extraordinary Interpositions in their Favour, while they continued an impenitent and disobedient People. On the contrary, those *old Stories* of the Miracles wrought at the first Establishment of their Law were also accompanied with an Account of God's righteous Severity against their *Ancestors* and the signal Punishments he inflicted upon them for their Obduracy and Impenitency. There was nothing in their whole Law that gave them Ground to hope for Prosperity and Happiness, or any

Mark

Marks of the divine Favour towards them, but in a Way of Righteousness and Obedience. And on the other hand, it taught them to expect to be distinguished above other Nations, with the most remarkable Judgments and Tokens of the divine Displeasure, in case of their persisting in an obstinate Course of Wickedness and Disobedience. Nor was there any Thing in their Belief of the extraordinary Things that were done at their Deliverance out of Egypt, that could reasonably induce them, in ordinary Cases, to neglect natural human Means, which God has ordained and established in the Course of his Providence; and to depend on all Occasions upon Miracles, immediate Interposition, and uninstrumental divine Agency: which is another Charge he advances against them. One would think by his Representation, that the whole Nation of the Jews in all Ages lived in a continual Expectation of nothing else but Miracles, that they thought not of using any rational human Means at all, but expected at all times to have Plenty of Food tho' they never plowed or sowed, and to be victorious over their Enemies without taking Arms or Fighting. But it does not appear from the History of their Nation in the Old Testament, that this was all along their Temper and Expectation. They are often blamed for making *Flesh* their *Arm*, and placing too much of their Dependence on the Aids of human Power, or the Methods of a worldly Policy, even to the Neglect and Disobedience of God's Commands and Law. In their *Prosperity*, when they were in a State of Wealth and Power, they were too apt to be over confident and secure; and in their *Adversity* when they did not see probable human Means for their Deliverance, they were apt to despond, such is the Weakness of our Nature, and it was a difficult thing to get their Minds raised to a steady Confidence in the divine Power and Goodness for restoring and delivering them. And

if at any time they were brought by any gracious Promise or Assurance that was given them in the Name of God, to hope that he would deliver them; they did not generally expect it in a way of *instrumental divine Agency*, as this Writer phraseth it: it did not make their great Men and *Heroes* sit still and neglect rational human Means, but rather animated and encouraged them to use the best Means they could for their own Deliverance, in hope that God would bless and give Success to their Endeavours: as is evident to any one that is at all acquainted with the History of the Old Testament.

We are now got into the Author's *Invektives* against the *Jews*, in which he seems to take an ill-natured Satisfaction. It appears from the Passages already produced, that he makes a very disadvantageous Representation of them, as having no Notion of Right or Wrong in Morality, and making no Distinction between the Laws of Nature, and the perfect Reverse of them. He frequently talks of "their constitutional natural Blindness which they had contracted in *Egypt* among their Fellow-Slaves; " that this Blindness, Bigotry, and Enthusiasm was " the incurable Distemper of this wretched People, and that they continued throughout all their " Generations under the same *Egyptian* Darknells " and mental Vassalage; and still retained the " gross Ignorance, strong Prejudices, and constitutional Character of that priestly enslaved Nation." He represents them as having " lost all " inward Sincerity and Integrity of Heart, and " all true Notions of God, of his natural and " moral Attributes and Perfections, and of his " providential Government of the World. That " they could not distinguish between the effective " and permissive Will of God, but ascribed every " thing equally to God, as ordering, directing, " and appointing the greatest moral as well as natural Evils. That their Superstition was such,

" that

“that neither the Law of Nature, nor the common Methods of God’s providential Government could at all affect them. That it is certain that after their going out of *Egypt*, notwithstanding their extraordinary Deliverance, they could scarce be parallell’d by any other Nation upon Earth, for their gross Ignorance, Superstition, and moral Wickedness, which ran through all their successive Generations, till their final Dissolution and Destruction.” He often talks of their national Blindness, Obduracy, and Impenitency. And finally pronounces, that “the People of *Israel* at first, and their Remains afterwards called *Jews*, were a most untoward, grossly ignorant, amazing, superstitious, and desperately wicked Generation of Men,” see p. 248, 256, &c. 263, 271.

This is some part of the Reproach which he pours forth upon that unhappy Nation, and which may give us a Specimen of the Spirit and Rhetoric of this Writer. Whatever Censures have been at any time passed upon the worst of the *Jews* in their most degenerate Times, he applies without Distinction to the whole Nation at all Times from first to last. The sacred Writers often reprove the *Jews* for their Faults, and if other Nations were to be dealt with as freely and impartially, they would not appear so fair as they now do in the Writings of partial and flattering *Historians*. But tho’ this Writer, and others, take Advantage of the Censures passed upon the *Jews* in Scripture, I do not see how they can consistently blame that People for those Faults, for which they are there principally reprov’d. If this Author be in the right, their Unbelief ought to be commended as a noble Instance of *Free-Thinking*; and their frequent Revoltings from their Law were glorious Efforts to shake off an intolerable Yoke of Tyranny and Vassalage that was impos’d upon them, and to resume their natural

natural Liberties. He is pleased highly to commend their idolatrous Princes, as acting upon Principles of Toleration and Liberty of Conscience, and seems to approve their joining with the neighbouring Nations in their idolatrous Rites and Usages. So that it is not the *Jews* as idolatrous, and imitating the *Heathens*, that he really designs to find fault with, but the *Jews* as adhering to their Law, and to the Commands there given, and the Worship there established; tho' the better to cover it, he takes Advantage of the Reproofs given them in Scripture for those Things which he himself must think to be no Crimes at all. It is their Law itself, and their best and greatest Men, those that most religiously adhered to that Law, that he principally intends to strike at by his slanderous *Invectives*, which he throws about without Distinction.

He affects frequently, as some others have done before him, to speak of the *Jews* as if they had something *naturally* gross and stupid in them below the rest of the human Species; and were by their natural Constitution, or by a kind of fatal Necessity doomed to perpetual Blindness, Superstition, and Slavery. He often talks of their natural and constitutional Blindness, Stupidity, Obduracy, &c. And is pleased to represent them as having contracted this constitutional natural Blindness in Egypt among their Fellow-Slaves, p. 248. It was natural and constitutional to them thro' all their Generations, and yet was contracted in Egypt. How this will agree I cannot tell, except it be said that in Egypt they contracted some odd Kind of Nature and Constitution, which like a Distemper, ran in their Blood, and was conveyed from Father to Son through all their successive Generations. And then it must be owned they were a wretched People indeed from first to last, but at the same time they were to be pitied more than blamed, and it was rather their Calamity than their Crime. And this being, as he calls

it, the incurable Distemper of this wretched People, no wonder that he asks, *What could Moses and the Prophets do with them?* for as he wisely observes, they could not new-make them, p. 271. And therefore it was impossible to govern and influence them but in their own way. And he tells us, that God gave them up to that Wickedness and Tyranny, under such a Dispensation of Blindness and Slavery, because there was no other way to be taken with them, p. 248. Where he speaks as if he thought God himself could not help them, or do any thing else with them, but give them up to Wickedness and Tyranny, Blindness and Slavery. Tho' at another time he seems to think, that the People might have been better, if they had been better instructed; and after having observed, that the *Prophets and Priests* were equally Egyptianized, he affects to pity the People, who had no better Means of Information, p. 265.

But when this Writer and others have said the worst against the *Jews*, that their Malice can suggest, and tho' he represents them as a Nation scarce to be parallell'd by any other Nation upon Earth for their gross Ignorance, and as having lost all true Notions of God, and of his natural and moral Attributes and Perfections, yet it is certain, that in their Knowledge of God and true Religion, they vastly exceeded all other Nations, even those that were most celebrated for their Wisdom and Learning; and were the only People that worshipped the one living and true God, when the rest of the World was overrun with Idolatry and false Worship. And there is Reason to think, that there were Numbers among them, even of the common People, that by their Acquaintance with their Law, which they were all commanded diligently to read and to consider, and in which they were to instruct their children, were brought to form juster and nobler notions of God, and of his Providence, of the duty they owed him, and the Worship that was

to be rendered to him, than even the Wise Men and Philosophers among the Pagans. And what rendered this more remarkable was, that they came out of *Egypt*, which according to this Writer was the *Mistress of Idolatry* to other Nations. *Egypt* was a Country illustrious among the Ancients for Riches, Arts, and Learning. From thence *Greece* principally derived her Knowledge, and thither her most renowned Philosophers and Wise Men travelled for Improvement. And yet Sir *John Marsham*, who is not partial to the *Hebrews*, justly observes, That it is beyond all doubt, that the *Hebrews* entertained most just and reverent Sentiments of the one true God that governs the World, whereas the Opinions of the *Egyptians* in that respect were very wrong. *Certe nulla est controversia, quin reperiatur monarchia, de unius regimine, sive de Deo unico, reverens fuerit et rectissima Hebræorum, non item recta Ægyptiorum existimatio*, Can. Chron. Sæcul. 9. And surely this was no Sign of an extraordinary Blindness and Ignorance in the *Hebrews* above other Nations.

Their *Laws*, in spite of this Author's Representation of them, to all candid and impartial Judges, discover an admirable Wisdom, Piety, Justice and Purity. Their Historians shew an unparallel'd Impartiality, and seem only to have in view the relating plain Truth without Disguise, and observing the happy Effects of Righteousness, Piety, and Virtue upon Kings and People, and the great Evils and Calamities that befel them, when they fell into Idolatry and Vice. Their Writers of *Religion and Morality* are admirable and unequal'd for the noble Conceptions of the supreme Being, of his glorious Perfections and governing Providence; for exhibiting Precepts of pure Morals, and Maxims of the truest Wisdom; for the most moving and pathetic Exhortations to Repentance, and to the Practice of Piety and Righteousness, and the most

earnest and impartial Reprehensions of Vice and Sin. Their *Heroes* and great Men, whose Actions are not blazon'd out by the Pens of flattering Historians, but related with a wonderful Brevity and Simplicity, were equal to the most renowned Heroes and great Men of any other Nation, for the Greatness of their Exploits, their Wisdom and Prudence, their Bravery and Magnanimity, their Love to their Country, and Zeal for its Liberties; but beyond Comparison superior to them all for their true *Piety* and profound Veneration towards God, and Zeal for his pure Worship, in opposition to *Idolatry* and *Superstition*. I cannot conceive therefore with what Justice or Decency those Gentlemen that so much admire the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*, and can scarce ever speak of the People in general, or of their great Men and Philosophers in particular without Rapture, should on all Occasions express such Contempt of the *Jews*, as the most stupid, blind, despicable Race of Men that ever lived upon the Earth: When their greatest Fault for many Ages was their falling into the Vices and Idolatries of the neighbouring Nations, and imitating their corrupt Customs and Manners. And yet we have Reason to think, that even in the Times of their greatest Degeneracy, and their most corrupt State under the *Old Testament*, there were incomparably more truly religious Men, and devout Adorers of the *Deity* among them, than in any other Nation under Heaven. We find that even in the Days of *Abah*, when *Israel* was in its most degenerate State, and the publick Idolatry at its greatest Height among them, there were several Thousands who, by the Testimony of God himself, persevered in his true Worship and Obedience, free from Idolatry; and no doubt there was a much greater Number at that time in *Judah*. And I believe the most extensive Charity can scarce suppose, that there was such a Number of true Worshipers

of God in Greece or Rome in their best Times. And the Truth is, we have no Account of any such; and their best and wisest Men did all of them countenance and encourage the Publick *Idolatry*, by their Maxims, and by their Practice.

Notwithstanding that the great Difference of their Customs, and of their Religion from the rest of Mankind, rendered the *Jews* very unpopular, yet the *Heathens* themselves could not help sometimes professing their Esteem and Admiration for them, and for their Laws, in a Manner that shewed they were far from looking upon them as such a stupid, senseless, contemptible Generation of Men as this Writer represents them. The judicious *Strabo* gives a handsome Testimony concerning them in his *sixteenth Book*, where he makes the Cause of *Moses's* forsaking *Egypt* to be his being dissatisfied with the false Notion and Worship of God that had obtained among the *Egyptians*, and supposes him to have entertained nobler Notions of the Divinity than the *Egyptians*, or *Lybians*, or *Greeks*. That therefore he went out from *Egypt*, and along with him many that honoured the Deity, πολλοὶ τιμῶντες τὸ θεῖον. That he persuaded many good Men, and brought them into the Country where *Jerusalem* is built; and that there his Successors continued for some time practising Justice or Righteousness, and being truly religious, or sincere Worshipers of God: δικαιοπραγῶντες ἡ θεοσεβεῖς ὡς ἀληθῶς οἶντες. So *Justin* out of *Trogus Pompeius* praises the antient *Jews* for their Justice joined with Piety, *justitia religione permixta*, *Just. lib. 36.* *Porphyrus* cited by *Eusebius*, *Præp. Evang. lib. 9. c. 10.* after having observed that the *Barbarians* had juster Notions of Religion than the *Greeks*, produces an Oracle from *Apollo*, which reckons the *Hebrews* among the Nations that found out and knew the Way to Happiness; and another in which it is pronounced that the *Chaldeans* and *Hebrews* alone obtained Wisdom, purely worshipping God.

God the [eternal] King. And in another Oracle there produced the *Hebrews* are called *αριζήματοι* illustrious or worthy to be emulated. I do not mention these as if any Stress was to be laid upon the Testimony of *Apollo's* Oracles, but only to shew the Opinion, that had then obtained among the Heathens themselves, of the Wisdom and Religion of the *Hebrews*: for if their Fame had not been far spread on this Account, the Oracle would scarce have described them under that Character.

There is one part of our Author's Invectives against the *Jews*, which I cannot pass by without a particular Notice. He charges them among other Things with not being able to distinguish between the effective and permissive Will of God; and with ascribing every thing equally to God as ordering, directing, and approving the greatest moral as well as natural Evils, though brought about by the Power and Malice of Tyrants and wicked Men. I might observe here that the *Sadducees*, whom he elsewhere represents as the true Remains of the antient *Jews*, were so far from being of this Sentiment, that according to *Josephus's* Account of them, they scarce allowed Providence any thing to do about any human Actions, and nothing at all about evil ones. But undoubtedly this Writer designs this as a Reflection upon the sacred Writings, which tho' they every where declare God's Detestation against Sin in the strongest Terms, yet represent his most wise and just Providence as directing and over-ruling all events; and teach us to regard his sovereign Hand in all the Evils and Calamities that befall us, tho' immediately inflicted by the Agency and Influence of wicked Men and Tyrants; of whose Wickedness and Injustice he is not the Author or Cause, but most wisely over-rules it for carrying on the important Designs of his Government. And must not every one that hath just Notions of Providence, or God's presiding over human Affairs, acknowledge

ledge the same thing? Even this Author, who, from a Desire of bespattering the Scriptures, would fain cavil at this Doctrine, yet frequently expresseth himself in a manner that cannot be vindicated on any other Principles. Thus he tells us, p. 244. that the *Egyptian Priests, by an Incidency of Providence, gained an Independency both of the Crown and People.* And after having censured the *Jews* for ascribing those things to the Providence of God which were brought about by wicked Men, he himself in the very next Sentence ascribes what according to his Account of it was a very ill thing to an extraordinary Interposition of divine Providence. For he tells us, p. 257. that the *Israelites* were delivered from Egypt by an extraordinary Providence, and brought off with all their Plunder, after having been the Plagues of the Country for above two hundred Years. And again, p. 260. he represents God as having in the Course of his Providence given the Kingdom to David, tho' according to the Representation he makes of that Matter, p. 299. he came to it by a Series of Falshoods, Perjuries, Treason and Rebellion.

Here it may not be improper to observe the Absurdity of this Writer, when undertaking to give an Account of the false Principles and gross Errors, which occasioned the Wickedness and Obstinacy of the *Jews*, and in which Principles and Errors he saith the *Egyptian Priests* and *Sorcerers* had confirmed them, p. 255. et seq. he makes the second of those Principles and Errors to be this, That after having been delivered from Egypt by an extraordinary Providence, they from thence took it in their Heads that they were the peculiar Favourites of Heaven by an absolute irreversible Decree; that they should from thenceforth succeed in all their Enterprises, and make themselves Masters of the whole World, &c. And the third Principle or Error he makes to be their gross Mistake of the Nature and

Design

Design of the Abrahamick Covenant, which they took in an absolute Sense ; tho' it was only conditional. Every one sees how absurd it is to suppose, that these were among the Principles in *which the Egyptian Priests and Sorcerers* had confirmed the *Israelites*. And yet this is what he affirms concerning all these Principles and Errors in general.

Not to follow him farther in his spiteful Reflections upon the *Jews*, I shall only observe, that in his great Desire to expose them, he seems willing to allow for a while the Miracles of *Moses* to have been true and real Facts, tho' at other times he represents them all as mere Fiction and Romance. He observes, that " within three Months after " *their most wonderful Deliverance from Egypt,* " *they fell into the Egyptian Idolatry.* And notwithstanding *all the Miracles they had seen there,* " *and their miraculous Passage through the Red Sea,* " *they made a Calf, &c.* And after *all the Miracles of Egypt, and the awful Manner of giving " the Law, &c.* they were just upon the Point of " making themselves a Captain to return thither," p. 268, 269. Thus he can own these Things to be real Facts, or make them all Fiction and Flourish just as it suits his present Convenience. And whereas he tells us, that *before they were brought out of Egypt they had been the most grievous and insupportable Plagues of an enslaved and ruined Country, i. e. of Egypt, for above two hundred Years,* p. 257. And again, p. 265. that *Egypt was a Country, which by divine Permission in the Course of his Providence, they, i. e. the Israelites, had enslaved and ruined :* this plainly lets us see how little Justice we are to expect from this Writer ; since the very contrary is true, that the *Israelites* had for a Succession of Years in *Egypt* before their miraculous Deliverance, undergone a Series of Cruelty and Oppression scarce to be paralleled in History. Hence they are often afterwards put in Mind that

they had been *Bond-men* in the Land of *Egypt*. And it is called a *Furnace of Iron*, and the *House of Bondage*. But our pretended Moral Philosopher, who would be thought such a Friend and Advocate for Liberty, can stand up for Tyranny and Oppression, when it is upon the *Jews* that they are exercised.

I shall conclude my Remarks on this Writer's *Invectives* against the *Jews*, with observing that it were greatly to be wished that those that are most forward to reproach that unhappy People, would be careful not to imitate them in some of the worst Parts of their Conduct and Character: Such as their sinning against great Advantages put into their Hands for knowing and practising their Duty; the general Corruption of Manners they fell into in the last Times of their State; their rejecting the many Calls and Warnings that were given them from time to time; and lastly, which compleated their Guilt, their obstinate Unbelief in rejecting the Saviour *Jesus Christ*; and the Revelation he brought to them, tho' attended with the most convincing and illustrious Attestations. These things at length brought a terrible Destruction upon them. And it becomes us *not to be high-minded but fear*, as the Apostle *Paul* advises on this Occasion. A Conduct like theirs, when once it becomes general among any People, is the surest way to expose them to God's heavy Displeasure, and to the most grievous Calamities. I cannot but think, the natural Tendency of the Attempts made by this Writer, and others of his Spirit, is to bring us into this Condition; but I hope God will in his infinite Mercy make their Endeavours as vain and ineffectual, as they are wicked and unreasonable.

C H A P. VIII.

A Transition to the Author's Objections against other Parts of the Old Testament. Concerning the two different Turns or distinct popular Appearances which he pretends the Spirit of Prophecy took in Israel. And first concerning the Urim and Thummim. His Account of the Original and Design of that Oracle considered. The Attempt he makes to destroy the Credit of it, because of the Part it had in the War against the Benjamites for the Injury done to the Levite and his Concubine at Gibeah. That whole Transaction particularly considered. His Account of the ceasing of that Oracle, and the Reasons he assigns for it, examined. The Order of Prophets, by his own Confession a wise and excellent Institution. The strange inconsistent Representation he gives of their Character and Conduct. The way he takes to account for their foretelling future Events, shewn to be insufficient. Their Predictions not merely general and ambiguous, but clear, express, and circumstantial. The Difference between the false Prophets and the true, considered. No Argument to be drawn from the former to the Disadvantage of the latter.

HAVING considered this Writer's Objections against the Law of Moses, our Way is clear to proceed to what he hath advanced in his Book against other Parts of the Old Testament. He sets himself with all his Might to ridicule and expose the Spirit of Prophecy under that Dispensation. He undertakes to prove, p. 265, 267. That the Prophets were not infallible, and that they never believed themselves to be so, but were under a Necessity to talk as they did, that is, as he had expressed it just before, to talk in the miraculous supernatural Way,

Way, and make themselves the infallible Oracles of God to the People: tho' they knew well enough, that they were not immediately inspired by God, and that he had not sent them at all. And he thinks or pretends to think, they were not blameable for this. It was only the Effect of human Prudence. They might falsify and deceive without Injury, and secure their own private Interest for the Publick Good. And he intimates, that a wise and good Man may do so, and that till a Man knows the Secret of doing this, he knows nothing of human Nature, or human Life, p. 266, 267. Thus I find it is a Maxim with our Moral Philosopher, Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur: and that upon Occasion, he could himself act the Prophet, and pretend immediate Inspiration and Revelations from God, if he thought it would answer his End with the People. But the antient Prophets were of a very different Spirit, and governed themselves by quite different Maxims and Principles.

But let us see what Proof he brings to shew that they were neither extraordinarily inspired by God, nor believed themselves to be so. And first he begins with observing, that *the Spirit of Prophecy in Israel, or the Spirit of infallibly declaring the Mind and Will of God, took two different Turns or distinct popular Appearances. From the Days of Moses to Samuel, the Oracle of Urim and Thummim was established as the last Resort in Judgment, and then it fell into Disgrace, and Samuel instituted the Order of Prophets.*

And first he begs leave to give a *brief History of the first and grand Device, as he calls it, the Oracle of Urim and Thummim, p. 267, &c.* — He insinuates, that the Original of it is to be ascribed to the People's having been much amused and surprized with the *infallible Declarations and Decisions of Jupiter Hammon*; and then after running out for three or four Pages together into his common

Place

Place of Invectives against the *Jews*, he observes, p. 272. That “ it is absolutely necessary to the
“ Ends of Government, that in every Society
“ there should be some dernier Resort, or ultimate
“ Appeal in Judgment. And this last and ulti-
“ mate Appeal in *Israel*, by the Establishment of
“ *Moses*, was to the Oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim*,
“ And this last Decision was made by the *High*
“ *Priest* as by a living Oracle, who gave his An-
“ swer, *viva voce*, while he sat with the *Urim* and
“ *Thummim* in Judgment. And while he wore
“ this sitting in Judgment, it was presumed that
“ he was both infallible and impeccable, or that his
“ Voice and Decision was the undoubted organiz-
“ ed Voice of God. But the Voice of this Ora-
“ cle was soon found to be the Voice of the Priest.”
p. 268. And then he proceeds to what he calls a
remarkable Proof that this Oracle was neither infal-
lible, nor impeccable, p. 273.

As to his Insinuation about the Oracle of *Jupi-
ter Hammon*, he shews his Inclination to draw a
Parallel between the Pagan Oracles and the Spirit
of Prophecy under the Old Testament Dispensa-
tion; but he offers no Proof for it, and we shall
hardly think his own Word a sufficient Authority.
And what he there observes concerning the *Doubt-
fulness and Ambiguity of the oracular Declarations*,
*which always gave them room enough for an Eva-
sion; and that the Oracle was never particular
enough to be tied down to Time and Circumstance*,
p. 268. is no way applicable to the many parti-
cular exprefs and circumstantial Predictions under
the Old Testament. Particularly with Regard to
the Oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim*; it is a just Ob-
servation of the learned Dr. *Prideaux*, that “ the
“ Name of *Urim* and *Thummim*, that is, *Light*
“ *and Perfection* [tho’ this Author shews his Skill
in the Original by rendring it *Truth* and *Righteous-
ness*] “ were given only to denote the Clearness
“ and

“ and Perfection, which these oracular Answers
 “ always carried with them; for these Answers
 “ were not like the Heathen Oracles, enigmatical
 “ and *ambiguous*; but always clear and *manifest*,
 “ not such as did ever fall short of Perfection,
 “ either of Fulness in the Answer, or Certainty
 “ in the Truth of it.” See *Prid. Connect. Part I. Book 3^d*. And it is certain that the Answers of this Oracle recorded in Scripture are clear, explicite, and direct to the Questions propounded to it.

When our Author represents the Oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim*, as appointed to be *the last Resort in Judgment*, to which, by *Moses's* Establishment, the *ultimate Appeal in Israel* was to be made; and describes the High Priest as *sitting with the Urim and Thummim in Judgment*, and making *the last Decision*; as if in judicial Causes the last Resort or Appeal lay to this Oracle; this is a gross Misrepresentation, either thro' Ignorance or Design. The *Urim* and *Thummim* was not established for deciding Causes in Judgment, which were decided in another Method; but for asking Counsel of God, and that not in *private* Affairs, but in Affairs relating to the *Publick*, to the King, or some chief Governor, or the whole People of *Israel*. Thus *Moses* saith concerning *Joshua* (and the *Jews* very justly interpret it as extending to the succeeding Governors) that *he shall stand before Eleazar the Priest, who shall ask Counsel for him, after the Judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his Word shall they go out, and at his Word shall they come in, both he and all the Children of Israel with him, even all the Congregation*, Numb. xxvii. 21. Where by their *going out* and *coming in*, the *Jews* understand particularly, the making War according to the Import of that Phrase in the Scripture Language. And this was well suited to the Nature of their Government as a *Theocracy*. As God had condescended to enter into a special Relation to them, as in a peculiar

culiar Sense their King and Governor, so he not only from time to time raised up extraordinary Persons to judge and govern them, the appointing of which he reserved to himself out of what *Tribe* he pleased; but by the Oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim*, he directed how they were to proceed in their most important publick Affairs. This was an Act of great Goodness and Condescension in God, and an inestimable Privilege to the *Israelites*, the Advantage of which they would have enjoyed, if they had persisted in their Obedience, and kept the Covenant *. They would in that Case never have wanted his gracious Direction as far as was necessary to their Security and Support. Thus it pleased God to indulge that Advantage to his chosen People in reality, to which the *Heathens* vainly pretended by their Oracles. As to the particular Manner in which this Oracle was delivered, I shall not enter into a Disquisition, which hath sufficiently employed the Learned: The Reader may see a short and judicious Account of it in Dr. *Prideaux* in the Place above-cited.

But however that be, this Writer pronounces, that it is certain, this Oracle was neither infallible nor impeccable: of which he tells us a remarkable Proof happened under the High Priesthood of *Phineas*, the Grandson of *Aaron*. And then he goes on to tell the Story after his own Way concerning the Injury done to the *Levite* and his Concubine at *Gibeab*; upon which, the whole Tribe of *Benjamin*, by the Decision of the Oracle, was doom'd to Destruction: and that this was done without the least

* It did not depend on the High Priest to give Answers by the *Urim* and *Thummim* whenever he pleased; it depended wholly on the Will of God, who might, in token of his just Displeasure against them for their Sins, see fit to withhold his Direction by this Oracle, either from the chief Rulers or the People, tho' they applied to him for that purpose. An Instance of which we have in *Saul*, who could obtain no Answer from God by *Urim*, tho' he earnestly desired it.

Truth, natural Honour, or common Justice, is evident from the Story itself. And after having represented the Fact in such a Manner as he thought would best answer his Design, he observes, that nothing was done in this whole Affair but under the Counsel and Direction of Phineas, the High-Priest, who was then the living Oracle of God in Israel. And that this makes it evident that the Oracle was neither infallible nor impeccable: so far from it, that he encouraged and prompted the People to the most bloody and cruel Outrage, that had ever been known or heard of: and an Injury done to a single Levite was thought fit to be revenged by cutting off a whole Tribe, Root and Branch, without any Regard to natural Justice, or the least Bowels of Mercy and Compassion. And that from this time the Oracle fell into Disgrace, and we hear no more of it for above three hundred Years, see p. 273—281. This Story serves the Author for more Purposes than one. As he produces it here to destroy the Credit of the Oracle of Urim and Thummim; so he had mentioned it before, p. 140, 141. as containing a plain Proof that Levi was a Tribe exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law, and protected against it: and that there was no Law for Priests and Levites at that time. Where also he represents that whole Transaction as a Scene of Wickedness, Injustice and Priestcraft.

I shall particularly examine the Author's Account of this Matter, by which it will appear how little he is to be trusted in his Accounts of Things, who can allow himself such a Scope in Misrepresentation in a Story so well known. He discovers from first to last not a Disposition to find out the Truth, or represent the Fact fairly as it was, but a most violent Inclination, first, to make it look as black as possible, and then to lay the whole Blame of it upon the Oracle. And where he does not find the Story for his Purpose, he endeavours to make it so.

The poor injured *Levite* has incurred his Displeasure; for what Reason I know not, except because he was a *Levite*. He calls him once and again the *drunken Levite*, p. 141. and p. 280. tho' there is not one Word of his Drunkenness in the whole Story. He insinuates indeed, that the *Levite* got drunk at his Father-in-law's, particularly the Day he came away. His Father-in-law desired him to stay and *comfort his Heart*: but it happens that the Text only tells us that they *tarried till Noon, and did eat both of them*, Judg. xix. 8. If it had been said, *they drank both of them*, it might have passed with this Author for a strong Proof, tho' I believe it will be allowed that People may drink together without being drunk. He observes also that we are told, that the *Levite* and the old *Ephramite* that entertained him at his House, *cheered their Hearts, and made merry together*, as if he thought it impossible for Persons to cheer their Hearts, and to refresh and entertain themselves and their Friends without being drunk. But these Things are easily distinguishable in themselves, whatever they are to this Author. Another Proof of his Good-will to the *Levite*, is his calling his *Concubine his Whore*; tho' every Body that is at all versed in these Matters, knows that a *Concubine* was a real Wife, but without a Dowry. And in the present Case, the *Levite* is several times expressly called her *Husband*, and her Father is called his *Father-in-law*: And this the Author very well knew, for in relating the Story he calls them so himself. And yet he has it over and over again, a *certain Levite with his eloped Concubine or Whore*; the *Levite's Concubine or rather Whore*; a *drunken Levite and his Whore*, p. 273, 276, 278, 280.

As to the *Levite's* Wife or Concubine, he saith, p. 275. that it is plain from the Story itself, that before her Elopement she had been a common Whore. It appears indeed from the Story according to our

Tran-

Translation, *Judg. xix. 2.* that she had proved unfaithful to his Bed, but nothing is said to fix upon her the Character of a *common Whore*. This is supplied by the Author's own Imagination. But the Word which our Translators render, *she played the Whore against him*, is in the Septuagint rendered, *ἠπορεύθη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*, *she went away from him*, or *forsook him*; and some Copies have it, *ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ*, *she was angry at him*. And Grotius observes that the Hebrew Word there made use of, which properly signifies to *play the Whore*, may also be used to signify an *Alienation of Mind or Affection*. *Jonathan* cited by *Vatablus* has it, *cum sprevisset eum*; and to the same purpose *Kimchi* cited by *Lud. De Dieu*, *despexit eum*; *she despised him*. And some judicious Commentators conclude from the Readiness he shewed to be reconciled, and his *speaking soft comfortable Words to her*, or as the Hebrew Phrase is, *speaking to her Heart*, ver. 3. that she was not guilty of *Adultery*. For then it is probable he would not have so solicitously sought for a Reconciliation, nor would it have been lawful for him to do so. And indeed, her going to her Father's House (for it does not appear that she was turned out, but that she went away of her self) and continuing there four Months, looks more like a Family Quarrel upon some other Account, than like the Act of a common Whore, who in all Probability would have shunned her Father's House as well as her Husband's; and could not well have expected a Refuge or Entertainment there. Another Attempt our Author makes to disguise the Story is, that he would fain insinuate, that the *Levite* and his *Concubine* had raised the Mob of *Gibeab* against them by their ill and lewd Behaviour. "How this
 "drunken Levite and his Whore behaved themselves, with what Decency and Civility on their
 "coming into the City, is not said: but this is
 "plain, that they had raised a Mob about them,
 "which

“ which had like to have done more Mischief,” p. 280. And he had said the same thing before, p. 275. and again, p. 281. That “ the Historian knew very well that this Affair would not bear a particular Relation, as to the Occasion and Circumstances which made such an Uproar in Gibeab; tho’ from what he hath said, one may easily guess at the true Grounds of this popular Outrage.” What the Author has particularly in view in these Insinuations I will not pretend to guess, but one Thing is plain, that he has a strong Inclination to lay the Blame rather on the *Levite* that suffered the Injury, than on those that inflicted it. Of any ill Behaviour of the *Levite* upon his coming into *Gibeab*, there is not the least Hint in the whole Story. The good old *Ephraimite* returning from the Field at Even found the *Levite* and his *Concubine* in the Street alone, no Mob about them, and no body taking Notice of them, and therefore in Compassion took these Strangers to his own House, being not willing that they should continue in the Street all Night, as knowing no doubt the Wickedness of the Place. Our Author next is pleased to observe that a violent outraging Mob in the middle of the Night beset the House, &c. He will have it to be done in the middle of the Night, with an intent, I suppose to insinuate, that the *Levite* and his *Host*, who were then refreshing themselves, sat up drinking and carousing till Midnight: but of this there is not one Word in the Story. It may rather be concluded from it, that this happened not long after the *Levite* had got into the old Man’s House, which was in the Evening. When they had given Provender to their *Asses*, and had washed their Feet, and were eating, and drinking, and chearing their Hearts, behold the Men of the City, certain Sons of Belial, beset the House round about, and beat at the Door, and spake to the Master of the House, the old Man, saying, bring forth

forth the Man that came into thine House that we may know him, *Judg. xix. 21, 22.* The very same Words that the Men of *Sodom* used to signify their detestable Design to abuse the *Angels* whom they took to be Men, *Gen. xix. 5.* Here it is plain that they did not want to have the *Levite* brought out to them for any Rudeness or uncivil Behaviour he had been guilty of, but to gratify their horrid and unnatural Lusts. And indeed, *Gibeab* seems to have been then like *Sodom*, both in Inhospitableness and unnatural Impurities. It was with Difficulty the *Levite* himself escaped, and probably upon his withstanding them it was that they threatened to kill him, as he informs the *Israelites*, *Judg. xx. 5.* But he was forced to give up his *Concubine* to their Lusts, whom by this Author's own Acknowledgment they forced and ravished to Death. But instead of shewing a just Detestation of so execrable a Crime, he expresses himself on this Occasion, in a Manner that cannot but be shocking to a chaste Ear, and which I shall not repeat.

There was then no Judge or supreme Magistrate in *Israel* to whom the *Levite* might apply for Redress, and for the Punishment of so enormous an Outrage. And therefore he took an extraordinary Method to raise an Indignation in the People, and ingage them to do him Justice. He divided the dead Body of his *Concubine* into twelve Parts, and sent them to the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, and consequently to the Tribe of *Benjamin* among the rest; which he concluded would make a deeper Impression upon them, than the bare Relation of the Story would have done. The Resentment the People generally shewed of so horrid a Wickedness, and their Behaviour on this Occasion, seems to me to furnish a plain Proof that there was still among them a great deal of national Virtue. We are told, that all that saw it said, *there was*

such Deed done nor seen from the Days that the Children of Israel came up out of the Land of Egypt unto this Day: consider of it, take Advice, and speak your Minds. Their being so strangely shocked at the Enormousness of the Crime, and declaring that no such Thing had been heard of among them before, shewed that they had been hitherto generally Strangers to such horrid Acts of Wickedness, Violence, and Impurity; for which the *Canaanites* that had lived in the Country before them had been particularly remarkable. It may be gathered from the Account that is given us, that they first considered it in their several Tribes, the chief Men of each Tribe among themselves, and then there was a general Assembly of all the People at *Mizpeh*. How long it was after the Fact before this Assembly was held, we are not told, or how and by what Methods it was convened; but undoubtedly by a common Consent among the several Tribes it was agreed that the whole Body of the People should meet on this Occasion. And then it was that a solemn Curse was denounced, devoting those to Death by a general Consent that should not come. For tho' each Tribe had a Government in itself, yet all the Tribes made up one Body, and they were all subject to the Authority of the Whole, or general Assembly of the Nation. When they were all met together, they were far from acting with such Precipitation as this Writer represents it. They proceeded in the most orderly Method. They first inquired into the Fact itself. Tell us, say they, how was this Wickedness. The Word in the Original *וַיִּשְׁאָלוּ* tell ye us, shews that they directed their Speech to more than one. Probably, the *Levite* and his Servant whom he had with him at *Gibeab*, and the old *Ephraimite* that entertained him were present at the Assembly. And tho' the *Levite* only is mentioned as relating the Fact, which no doubt he did at large in all its Circumstances, they were there to

confirm and attest the Truth of it. This Writer indeed takes upon him to affirm, that the *Levite's Account was taken without any farther Enquiry*. What farther Enquiry could be made? The Tribe of *Benjamin* had notice given them of the Fact in the same way that all the other Tribes knew it, and were summoned to come as well as the other Tribes, to the general Assembly of the Nation. If the Story had been false, why did they not appear to confront it, and to justify themselves, or excuse their Countrymen? For we are expressly told, that *the Children of Benjamin heard, that the Children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh, chap. xx. 3.* They knew it, and yet would not come; which shewed little Love to Justice, or Disposition to Peace, and was a high Contempt of the *national Authority*, and a breaking off from that Body of which they were a Part. But the Assembly, tho' they had great Reason to be offended at such a Conduct, did not as this Author represents it, *immediately resolve upon the Destruction of the whole Tribe*. After they had a full Information of the Fact which they carefully enquired into, all the Resolution they took upon it was to punish the Inhabitants of *Gibeah*, i. e. the immediate Authors of this execrable Wickedness, *according to the Folly or Wickedness they had wrought in Israel, ver. 9, 10, 11.* And then again, after this, we are told, that *the Tribes of Israel, (i. e. the whole Assembly of the Nation which were then gathered and knit together as one Man, as it is there expressed) sent Men through all the Tribe of Benjamin, saying, what Wickedness is this that is done among you? now therefore deliver us the Men, the Children of Belial which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to Death, and put away Evil from Israel, ver. 12, 13.* All that they desired was, that they would give up those Persons to Justice that had perpetrated this horrid Wickedness. And could any Message be more reason-

reasonable, or more conformable to the Rules of Justice and Equity than this? With this Message *they sent Men*, and no doubt Persons of Note, thro' all *the Tribe of Benjamin*, to all their Cities, and to the chief *Heads of Families* amongst them, as some very justly understand it, who were to expostulate with them, and use their utmost Persuasions to engage them to comply with so reasonable a Demand. But what Reception they met with appears from *ver. 13.* *But the Children of Benjamin would not hearken to the Voice of their Brethren the Children of Israel.* This Writer indeed is pleased to tell us, what the *Benjamites* said to justify or excuse themselves, of which there is not one Word in the whole Story. *They refused to deliver up any of their Citizens, as nothing could be charged on any particular Persons,* p. 277. And again, p. 280. *When the whole Mob of a Town was up in the middle of the Night (tho' as I have already shewn it is probable they first beset the House, and begun the Outrage in the Evening) it must have been impossible to have charged any Mischief done upon particular Persons, or that the Magistrates of Gibeah should give up the Rioters demanded by the other Tribes, and by the High Priest: Tho' of the High Priest's demanding them there is not the least Account.* But why then did not the *Benjamites* come as well as the rest of the Tribes to the general Assembly of the Nation to represent this, who they knew were met together to inquire into it? Why did they not shew a Disposition to give them up if they could be found, and to use their best Diligence to find them out and punish them? This no doubt, would have satisfied their Brethren, who sufficiently shewed how willing they were to accept Satisfaction in a fair way, and how loth to break with them. But the Truth is, there is reason to think they knew well enough who the guilty Persons were: in such a Town as *Gibeah*, that was not very large, it was

no hard Matter to discover who were the principal Persons concerned in this Outrage, and the old *Ephraimite* who lived there, and was well acquainted with the Town, and who went out to them, and spoke with them, must be supposed to have known several of them; and therefore was well able to give Information about this. It was not therefore that they did not know who they were; but tho' they knew them well enough, they *refused* to deliver them up to Justice; and thereby became *Accessaries* to their Crime, and involved themselves in the Guilt and Punishment of it. For the Refusal of so just a Demand, was a sufficient Ground for War against them; concerning which see *Grot. de Jure belli & pacis, lib. 2. cap. 21. S. 1, 2, 3, 4.* But this was not all; it doth not appear that the *Israelites* still had any thing farther in view than to punish the Inhabitants of *Gibeah*. We only find that they *incamped against Gibeah to fight against it*, but not that they had determined to destroy the rest of the Tribe of *Benjamin*. All that they did, when provoked by their evil Conduct, was to take a solemn Oath, that *none of them would give their Daughters to Benjamin to wife*, see Chap. xxi. 1, 7. Which plainly shews that they had then no Intention of utterly *destroying* that Tribe, but only to shew their *Abhorrence* of their Wickedness, by breaking off Correspondence with them, and regarding them as not of their Society, or belonging to their Body; from which indeed they had cut themselves off by their Conduct. But what brought Destruction upon the *Benjamites* was this, that they not only refused to *hearken to the Voice of their Brethren the Children of Israel*, in giving up the Criminals when justly demanded, but as it follows, *they gathered themselves together out of the Cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the Children of Israel, ver. 14.* Thus in a base and scandalous Cause for the sake of some wicked Criminals they

entred

entred into a most unjust War against the Body of their own Nation, which in the Event brought upon them a severe Vengeance. Hitherto we hear nothing of the *Oracle's* being consulted. But now the War being resolved upon, the *Israelites* asked *Counsel of God*, not whether they should go to War at all, for they seem to have thought the Justice of the War so clear, that they had not the least Doubt concerning it, but which of the *Tribes* should go up first, or have the chief Command in the War, they being upon an Equality, and no Judge or *General* with a supreme Authority over the whole. Nor did they enquire whether they were to have Success in it, for upon this it is likely they confidently presumed, both because of their Numbers and Power, and because of the Justice of their Cause. But when the Event did not answer their Expectations, they consulted the *Oracle* again, which the third time promised them Success, which it had not done before. And this is all the Concern the *Oracle* had in this War. Nor is there the least Hint of their consulting it any more in the whole Story. As to the Slaughter that followed upon it, after the *Israelites* had been twice defeated, no doubt their Passions were raised to the Height, partly by their Indignation against the Wickedness that had been committed, and against the *Benjamites* for rejecting all the friendly Offers that had been made to them, and partly by the great Loss and Slaughter they had sustained in the two first Engagements; and then they gave too great a loose to their Rage and Resentment, in utterly destroying all the Cities of *Benjamin* with the Men, Women, &c. The Author takes upon him to affirm, p. 273. That *the whole Tribe of Benjamin was by the Decision of the Oracle doomed to Destruction*. But this is his own Fiction without any thing in the Story to support it. There seems to have been no Resolution of this Kind taken before. And the

Oath which they took with regard to *Benjamin*, and which I mentioned before, plainly implies the contrary. It all appears to have been done at once in the Heat of Blood and Passion, without consulting the *Oracle*, or giving themselves time to cool and to consider Things. And accordingly, they were sensible of it themselves, and deeply concerned for it when the Rage was over. This Writer would fain insinuate, that they laid the Blame of what they had done upon the *Oracle* itself; nothing of which appears, but rather that they repented of their own *Rashness*, Chap. xxi. 6. And we find the *Elders of the Congregation* as they are called, ver. 16. who are the same that are called, Chap. xx. 2. *The Chief of all the People, even of all the Tribes of Israel*, plainly charged it upon themselves, when they said to the Parents of the Virgins at *Shiloh*, whom the *Benjamites* were suffered to take away, *be favourable unto them for our Sakes; because we reserved not to every Man his Wife in the War*, ver. 20. that is, because we rashly carried the Slaughter so far, as not to leave the Women of the Tribe to be Wives to the Men that should remain.

As to the Slaughter of the Inhabitants of *Jabesh Gilead*, this is expressly ascribed, not to the Advice of the *Oracle*, but to the *Congregation*, or the People themselves, probably the Heads of them, who sent 12000 Men to destroy it, Chap. xxi. 5, 8, 10. This Writer seems to think the Inhabitants of *Jabesh* were much to be commended for not having involved themselves in the same Difficulties with the rest of the *Israelites*, or been any ways concerned in this most unrighteous Effusion of Blood. But since they had received the Summons that was sent thro' all *Israel*, and undoubtedly knew of the Oath or Curse that had been made in the general Assembly of the Nation, devoting those to Death that should not come, their refusing to come to the

general

general Consult, and to submit to the Appointment, especially in a just Cause, was a very great Crime, and a *Rebellion* against the Authority of the whole Community; and they thereby were the Authors of their own Destruction, which in that Case they had reason to expect. But if the Punishment inflicted upon them was carried too far, as undoubtedly it was, whatever there was wrong or cruel in this Proceeding, could not be charged upon the *Oracle*, which was not consulted at all about it. Nor had the *Oracle* any thing to do in the Contrivance of suffering the *Benjamite* young Men to take the Virgins at *Shiloh*. This is expressly ascribed to the *Elders of the Congregation*, or Chief of the People, *Chap. xxi. 16, 19, 20.* who having a great Reverence for an Oath, thought of this Expedient to provide Wives for the *Benjamites*, and yet not violate the Oath they had taken, tho' it was a rash one. I shall not undertake to vindicate their Casuistry in this, tho' a very great Man, *Grotius*, thinks their Conduct in it was very justifiable, and that thereby they saved themselves from the Guilt of Perjury. See *Grot. de Jure belli et pacis, lib. 2. cap. 13. §. 5.*

Our Author observes, "that the *Hebrew Historian* was so conscious of the moral Iniquity "and Wickedness of all this, that he concludes "the Story with these remarkable Words," in those Days there was no King in Israel, but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes. The Design of these Words is to signify, that there was then no chief Governor that had a supreme Authority over the People. And therefore it is usually and justly thought to have happened in the Interval between the Death of *Joshua*, and the *Elders* that survived him, and the Appointment of *Judges*, the first of whom was *Othniel*. And therefore no wonder that there were great Crimes committed, and great Irregularities in the Management

ment of their Affairs, and particularly of this Affair, since there was no one that had sufficient Power to punish Delinquents, or to govern the People and restrain their Fury, or to guide and conduct them with a proper Authority. But then this Writer adds, that " he [the Historian] seems " to have forgotten what he had just before told " us, that there was a High Priest in *Israel* at that " time, as the living Oracle of God, &c. and " that nothing had been done in this whole Affair, " but under his Council and Direction." But this is not to be charged on the *Historian's* Forgetfulness or Design. Tho' there was an *High Priest*, yet he was not a *King* or Judge with supreme Authority to govern the Nation, nor had he the Power of the Sword, to punish Delinquents, or correct Abuses. Nor doth it appear by any one thing in the whole Course of the Story, that the *High Priest* then had, or exercised any Authority or *Sovereign Power* over the People. This is expressly attributed to the *Chief of the People*, or Heads of the Tribes, and *Elders of the Congregation*. And all that the *High Priest* had to do in it, was only to give them Answers when they consulted the *Oracle of God*, which it doth not appear they did after the last Battle. And therefore none of the wrong Things they did after this are chargeable upon the *Oracle*. Nor is there any Evidence to shew, that they consulted it with regard to any one part of their Conduct, which was really culpable. So far is it from being true, that nothing had been done in this whole Affair, without the *High Priest's* Direction and Advice.

Thus have I particularly considered this Affair, on which this Writer lays so mighty a Stress, and which is the only Thing he produces to destroy the Credit of the *Oracle of Urim and Thummim*. As to what he adds, p. 281. that from that time the *Oracle* fell into Disgrace, since we hear no more of

is for above three hundred Years, or till the Days of David: it doth not follow that it was not consulted, because we have no particular Account of it in the short History that is given us of the Judges, And David's consulting it, which our Author owns he did three or four Times, while he was under his Difficulties and Distresses (and he might have mentioned Saul too, who consulted it, as appears from 1 Sam. xiv. 18, 19, 36, 37. xxviii. 6.) plainly shews, that the Reputation of it was not then sunk; and makes it very probable, that it had not lain neglected for above three hundred Years. And whereas he tells us, that when David came to be settled in the Kingdom, we hear no more of it, nor do we find it ever mentioned, consulted, or regarded after, we are expressly told twice in one Chapter, that after David was fully settled in his Kingdom, he inquired of the Lord when he was at War with the Philistines, 2 Sam. v. 19, 23, 24. See another Instance of it. 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Our Author, after having put the Disgrace of the Oracle upon the Business at *Jabesh*, afterwards tells us, that "it is plain from the History itself, that the Credit of this Oracle sunk and declined with the Reputation of the Priests, who had fallen into a State of the grossest Ignorance and Vice; and by their scandalous Behaviour in the Days of *Eli* and *Samuel*, were perfectly scorned and despised by the meanest of the People." The History indeed informs us of the scandalous Behaviour of *Eli's* Sons, but gives us no Account of the Corruption of the Priests in general, or if it were so, this did not affect the Reputation of the Oracle of *Urim and Thummim*, since it is certain from the Instances already mentioned, that after the time he assigns for that general Corruption of the Priesthood, this Oracle was still held in great Esteem, and was consulted by *David*, both before he came to the Throne and afterwards. Nor is there

there any Proof that the *Priests* were, from the time he mentions, more sunk in their Reputation than before: on the contrary, it might be shewn from several Instances, that both in the Reign of *David*, and under some of the best of the succeeding Kings, that Order was as much esteemed as ever it had been. So that if the *Oracle* ceased at that time, it could not be owing to the Cause he assigns for it. Some, as the learned *Dr. Spencer*, who suppose it to have ceased from the Time of *Solomon*, assign very different Reasons for it*. But it seems to me more probable, that it continued till the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity. It is true, we have no particular Account of its being consulted under the *Kings*, any more than that it was consulted under the *Judges*, but very probably it was consulted under both: tho' in the time of the *Kings*, there being a constant Succession of inspired Prophets made Applications to it less frequent, and less necessary. That Passage, *Ezra* ii. 63. and *Neb.* vii. 65. where the *Tirshatha* or Governor, determined that the *Priests* that had lost the Register of their Genealogies, should not eat of the most holy Things, till there stood up a *Priest* with *Urim* and *Thummim*; as it shews, that at the Time of their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity there was no *Urim* and *Thummim*, so it seems plainly to intimate that before that Captivity under the first Temple, there had been a *Priest* with *Urim* and *Thummim*, and that they were in hopes it would be so again. But we never hear of it afterwards, tho' it is certain the Priesthood was never in greater Power and Reputation than under the second Temple; which shews that that Oracle did not rise or fall, with the Reputation of the Priesthood, nor had any Dependence upon it.

* See *Spencer. Dissert. de Urim & Thum.* cap. 7.

Our Author, after making this Representation of the Oracle of Urim and Thummim, proceeds to give an Account of the Institution of the Order of *Prophets*, which he makes to be the second *different Turn*, or *distinct popular Appearance*, which the Spirit of Prophecy took in *Israel*. And he represents this as a new Institution set up by *Samuel*. If he intends by this to insinuate that there were no Prophets before, it is a great Mistake, as appears from several Instances mentioned in Scripture. See *Gen. xx. 7. Numb. xi. 25, 26. Judg. vi. 8. 1 Sam. ii. 27—36.* And *Moses*, the most eminent of all the Prophets, *Numb. xii. 6, 7, 8. Deut. xxxiv. 10.* was long before that time. But I will grant that from the time of *Samuel* there seems to have been a more constant Succession of Prophets than there was before. At what time there were *Colleges*, as this Author call them, of Prophets first erected we are not informed in the sacred Writings; but have Reason to think that there were some such Things in the Days of *Samuel*, and under his special Inspection. Thus we read of a *company of Prophets prophesying together*, and *Samuel standing as appointed over them*, *1 Sam. xix. 20.* and of another Company of Prophets before this, *2 Sam. x. 5.* It is very probable that there were Places where they lived together in Society, and devoted themselves to religious Exercises; and that these were in the Nature of Seminaries, where Persons were trained up under the Direction of one or more eminent Prophet or Prophets strictly so called, in the Knowledge of the Law, and in just and worthy Notions of Religion and of the supreme Being; such as every where appear in the prophetical Writings; and were employed in solemn Acts of Adoration to God, particularly in Prayer and Praise; or composing and singing sacred Hymns to his Honour. This was so usual and constant a Part of their Exercise, that praising God is often honoured

honoured with the Name of *Prophecy*, even where no special Inspiration is intended. Thus we read of the *Levites* being appointed by *David* to *prophecy with the Harp, with Psalteries, and Cymbals*, 1 Chron. xxv. 1—6. It is probable that the Persons who were educated, and who lived together in those prophetic Colleges, were usually called *Prophets*, even tho' they were not immediately and extraordinarily inspired; and because *Jezabel* was for utterly exterminating these Schools of the *Prophets*, which helped to keep up and spread the Knowledge of Religion, and the true Worship of God, * and endeavoured to destroy all that were to be found in those sacred Seminaries, she is represented as destroying the *Prophets of the Lord*, of whom *Obadiab* concealed a hundred. These are probably the same Persons that are at other times called the *Sons of the Prophets*, and thereby distinguished from the *Prophets* eminently so called, to whom they ministered, and under whose Discipline and Instructions they were educated. And tho' many of these never became *Prophets* in the most strict and eminent Sense, yet as they addicted themselves to Meditation and Prayer, to a devout singing Praises to God, and to the Study of the Law under the *Prophets* Direction, so they were thereby well qualified to be useful to the People. And it may very justly be supposed that out of Souls thus prepared and disposed God often chose Persons whom it pleased him to honour with his sacred immediate Inspiration. Thus 1 Kings ch. xxth, we read of one who is called a *Prophet*, ver. 38. and

* That the People were wont at stated times to have recourse to the *Prophets* for Instruction in Religion, especially on the Sabbaths and New Moons, may be probably gathered from what the *Shunamite's* Husband said to her, when she wanted to go to the *Man of God*; wherefore wilt thou go to him to Day, it is neither New Moon, nor Sabbath, 2 Kings iv. 23.

one of the Prophets, ver. 41. and in the 35th Verse the same Person is called a *certain Man of the Sons of the Prophets*, to shew that he belonged to one of the prophetic Colleges, and had his Education there. But that it might not be thought that the prophetic Spirit was merely the Effect of their being educated in those Seminaries, it pleased God to call some to the Office of Prophets, and to grant them his extraordinary Inspiration, who never were educated in those Schools at all. Such was the Prophet *Amos*; *Amos* vii. 14, 15. and probably that eminent Prophet *Elisha*; as may be gathered from *1 Kings* xix, 20, 21. and perhaps *Elijah* himself, and several others of the Prophets.

God's raising up such Prophets among the *Jews* from time to time, is frequently mentioned as an extraordinary Instance of his Goodness and Condescension towards that People. See *2 Kings* xvii. 18. *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 15, 16. *Jer.* vii. 25. xxv. 4, 5, 6. From which Passages it appeareth that they were sent in the Name of God to *instruct* the People in true Religion, to warn them against Idolatry and other Wickedness, and to call them to Repentance, and give them the most warm and lively Exhortations to the Practice of universal Righteousness; and how well they performed this, we have a manifest Proof from their admirable Writings still extant. They were also frequently inspired to *foretell* future Events. And this was ordered for wise and valuable Ends. The Heathens boasted of their Oracles; they had many Arts of Divination among them, and Persons that pretended to the Knowledge of future Events by Communication with their Gods, which did not a little contribute to keep up the Reputation of the spreading Idolatry. All these Arts of Divination were expressly forbidden to the *Jews* in their Law, *Deut.* xviii. 10, 11, 12. But it pleased God in his great Goodness and Condescension to raise up Prophets among them, who

were

were enabled to foretel future Events which it was impossible for any human Sagacity to foresee, and that in such a Manner as exhibited a glorious triumph over all the Heathen Idols and their Worshipers in that which they vainly pretended to; and thereby manifestly contributed to the main Design of the Law, which was to preserve the People from Idolatry, and from running after the Vanities of the Heathens. Some of the prophetical Predictions related to Things which were to happen in their *own* time, whether of a private or of a more publick Nature: the exact Accomplishment of which tended to engage the People to pay a greater Regard to their pure and excellent Instructions and Exhortations. Others of their Predictions related to Things that were to happen in *future* Ages at a considerable Distance of Time, and the fulfilling of these from time to time in their proper Season, gave a still farther Proof that they were extraordinarily inspired of God. But especially many of their Predictions looked forward to the great *Messiah* or Saviour of Mankind, and to the Dispensation he was to introduce. For the Prophets themselves were not sent to bring in any new Dispensation, or to teach and publish any new Doctrines or Laws; but their Mission was evidently appointed with a double View; the one towards the *Law of Moses* which had been already given, and the Authority of which the Prophets did farther confirm and establish, and endeavoured to keep the People to the Observation of it whilst it continued in force; the other View was towards the *future Dispensation of the Messiah*, whose coming Kingdom, Covenant, Offices and Character they pointed out and foretold at sundry Times and in divers Manners, with great Variety and a wonderful Harmony; and thereby kept up the People's Expectation towards it, which otherwise would have languished, and probably have been lost, and

prepared

prepared them for it. Thus the Spirit of Prophecy in the antient Prophets, was appointed and ordered for very valuable Ends. It was not only useful to the Age and Nation in which they lived, but the Advantage arising from it is of extensive Influence to other Nations, and to succeeding Generations. Their pathetical Exhortations to the Practice of Righteousness, their lively Warnings and Reproofs for Sin, and the just and noble Ideas they give of God and Religion are of signal Use in all Ages, and the reviewing their Predictions, and comparing them with the Events, furnisheth a glorious Proof of the Extent of the divine Foreknowledge, and the comprehensive Views of the divine Providence: it tends to strengthen our Belief of a most wise presiding Mind governing the World, and the Affairs of Mankind; as well as gives a glorious Attestation to the divine Mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the evangelical Dispensation, as I shall have Occasion to shew more fully afterwards.

The Account our Author at first gives of the Institution of the *prophetick* Order seems to be very much to their Honour, *p.* 282, &c. For tho' he will not allow that they were extraordinarily inspired of God, yet if his own Account of their Institution be just, it was one of the noblest and best designed in the World, and is scarce to be parallell'd among the wisest and most celebrated Institutions of Antiquity, and redounds very much to the Honour of *Samuel*, whom he makes the Author of it. He tells us, that when the Priesthood was fallen into great Degeneracy, *Samuel's* Design in instituting the propheticall Order, was "to restore Learning and Virtue, and to restrain the Vices both of Priests and People. He represents the Prophets as devoted to Learning, Study, and Retirement, as studying History, Rhetorick, Poetry, and the Knowledge of Nature, but

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"above

" above all, moral Philosophy, or the Know-
 " ledge of God's Providence, and human Nature;
 " That the moral Rules to be observed in this
 " Society were very strict and severe; they were
 " to live in a low abstemious Way, retired from
 " the World, without Ambition or Avarice, and
 " to exemplify as well as preach the most perfect
 " Righteousness and rigid Virtue; and to rebuke
 " and correct Vice wherever they found it without
 " the least respect of Persons." This being so, no
 wonder that he expressly calls it *a most wise and ex-*
cellent Institution, especially since he affirms, p.
 284. that " the proper Business of the Prophets,
 " and the Design of their Institution and Order
 " was to preach moral Truth and Righteousness,
 " to keep the People to the moral Law, and
 " bring them to Repentance as the necessary Means
 " of their Happiness and Safety, and the only
 " Condition of the divine Favour." And he re-
 peats it, p. 285. that " this was undoubtedly the
 " Nature and Design of the prophetick Order and
 " Office. And he seems to pity their hard Lot in
 " being cast among such an ignorant superstitious
 " People, who often used them very ill," p. 290.
 Hitherto one would think he entertained a very
 good Opinion of the Prophets, especially since he
 thinks fit to honour them with that Title for which
 he professeth so great a Veneration, that of *Phi-*
losophers and Moralists, p. 287. and represents them
 as opposing the Priests, and endeavouring to *take the*
People from their superstitious Dependence on Sacri-
fices and Absolutions, p. 304.

But who would think it, that after making this
 Representation of the Prophets he bends his whole
 Force to prove, that they were the most dangerous
Incendiaries, the greatest Plagues to their Coun-
 trey, that ever any Nation was troubled with
 and the Cause of all the *Miseries and Calamities*
 that befel it *for above three hundred Years*, and
 which

which at length terminated in its Ruin. That they marked out every King and Royal Family for Destruction, that would not come into their Measures, and raised the most formidable and bloody Rebellions against them; that they were continually ingaged in fomenting religious Wars, Massacres, Outrages, and Persecutions; till at length both Kings and Prophets were exterminated, and the whole Nation perfectly enslaved, p. 299, 304, 320, &c. In a Word, so great is his Zeal against them, that for a while he seems to forget his Animosity against the Priests, and lays all the Calamities of *Israel* not upon the Priests, but upon these Prophets and moral Philosophers. There is no accounting for so extraordinary a Rage against them, but that some of them happen to be the Penmen of several Parts of the Holy Scripture, and are represented both in the Old Testament, and in the New, as divinely inspired, and therefore he is determined to do all that in him lies to represent them as the worst of the human Race; tho' at the Expence of all that can be called Candour, Truth, and Decency.

That I may observe some Order in my Remarks, tho' he observes none in his Invectives, I shall first consider what he offers against the divine Inspiration of the Prophets, and their having the Knowledge of Things future communicated to them in a supernatural way; and then shall proceed to the Reflections he casts upon their moral Character, and the Attempts he makes to shew that they were the Enemies and Disturbers of their Country: after which I shall consider some scattered Insinuations against them, which cannot so well be reduced to either of the foregoing Heads.

Our Author, as I have already hinted, even when he seems to give the most advantageous Account of the Prophets, plainly denies them to have been divinely inspired. But that "by their Retirement and Study they had acquired such high

“ Degrees of Knowledge, that the common Peo-
 “ ple looked upon them as wholly miraculous and
 “ supernatural, and believed they had immediate
 “ and free Conversation with God, Angels, and
 “ departed Souls, and that they knew the Hearts
 “ of Men, and future Events, &c.” p. 284. And
 he tells us that “ the Prophets themselves in time
 “ degenerated from the Strictness and Purity of
 “ their first Institution, and particularly that they
 “ pretended too much to the Knowledge of Futu-
 “ rity ; and by this Means sometimes *prophefied*
 “ *Lies* in the Name of the Lord, as four hundred
 “ of them did at once in the Case of *Abab*.” That
 “ they vied with one another in their Predictions,
 “ and carried their Pretensions too high as a Means
 “ to get Money,” p. 304, 305. And whereas
 they often foretold future Events, he endeavours to
 account for it several ways. He tells us that “ they
 “ had not in any Case the Knowledge of Things
 “ future communicated to them in a supernatural
 “ Way ; but that as they were Men of Study and
 “ Retirement, who nicely observed the Conduct
 “ of Providence, and the various Revolutions of
 “ Kingdoms and States in their very Beginnings
 “ and first Occasions, this might enable them upon
 “ rational Principles, to give a very near guess at
 “ what would happen, especially as to the great
 “ Turns and Changes of Nations and Governments.”
 He instances in the Predictions of the *Affyrian* and
Babylonish Captivity, which he thinks every Man
 that had Eyes in his Head might have foreseen as
 unavoidable. But being sensible that all this will
 hardly account for particular, express, circumstantial
 Predictions of future Events, he thinks fit to add,
 that “ the Prophets when they struck at future
 “ Events, were not very particular and circum-
 “ stantial as to Time, Place, Persons, &c. They
 “ generally deliver their Presages in dark and ob-
 “ scure Terms, and only relate for the most part
 “ their

“ their Dreams and Visions of the Night, the Interpretation of which is extremely difficult, and may be applied to a thousand different Events from that time to this, and so on to the End of the World. And that by this Means the ancient Prophets in great measure saved themselves, and were not answerable for Particulars in Futurity, whilst they were soothing the superstitious People with an imaginary Knowledge of what was to come,” p. 288, 289. And lastly, he tells us, that “ there are likewise several Instances to be given, in which the Prophets brought about their own Predictions by accomplishing in a natural way, what they had resolved upon before. He instances in the Method taken by *Samuel* to set aside *Saul* and his Family, and in the Management of the Prophet *Elisba* with *Hazael* the chief Captain of the King of *Syria*,” p. 305

I have laid these several Passages together, that the Author's Sentiments may appear in their just Light, and in their full Strength.

That the *Prophets* strictly and properly so called were not only regarded by the Vulgar as divinely inspired, but that they themselves pretended to be so, and that they delivered Messages to the People as what they had received by immediate Revelation from God, is incontestable. And not only did they in the Name of *God* deliver solemn Warnings and Exhortations to the People to engage them to Repentance, and the Practice of true Religion and Righteousness, but they frequently professed to foretel future Events, and that not merely by probable Conjecture, but in a way of certain Prediction, as having the Knowledge of them extraordinarily communicated to them by God himself. It will be easily allowed that some of the Prophecies have a considerable Obscurity in them, for which several Reasons might be assigned; but it is also certain

that many of their Predictions are clear and express, *particular and circumstantial, as to Time, Place, Persons*, and that with regard to Events which no human Sagacity could foresee, and which none of the Ways mentioned by this Author can possibly account for.

Thus, *e. g.* what could be more plain or circumstantial than that Prediction of a Prophet to King *Jeroboam*, that a *Child* should be born unto the House of *David*, *Josiah* by Name, who should destroy the Altar at *Bethel*, and burn dead Men's Bones upon it to pollute it; and this foretold *three hundred and fifty Years* before it happened? *1 Kings* xiii. 2—6. Could any thing be more distinct or more wonderful than *Isaiab's* foretelling the Victories and Conquests of *Cyrus* by Name, and his letting go the *Captives of Judah*, *not for Price or Reward*, and this near *two hundred Years* before it came to pass, see *Isa.* xlv. 1—5, 13. Our Author thinks it was easy to foresee the Conquest and Captivity of *Israel* by the *A Assyrians*, who were then in the Height of their Power, but was it possible for any human Sagacity to foresee that when *Senacberib* at the Head of a mighty Army was on the Point of besieging *Jerusalem*, and gave out such terrible Threatnings against it, and there was no human Force to oppose him; he should not besiege it at all, nor so much as *shoot an Arrow against it*, but be obliged to *return with Disgrace to his own Land*, and there be *slain with the Sword*? and yet this the Prophet *Isaiab* clearly and expressly foretold, and it was accomplished in every Circumstance; see the xxxviiith Chapter of *Isaiab*, and *2 Kings* xix. The same Prophet, when *Babylon* was at Peace with *Judea*, and all the Danger of the *Jews* seemed to be from *A Assyria*, which was then in its greatest Power; and none from *Babylon* at all; foretold to *Hezekiab* the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the King of *Babylon*, and the carrying the Royal Family cap-

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tive thither, above a *hunderd* Years before that Destruction happened, *Isa.* xxxix. 6, 7. He also expressly foretold the dreadful Destruction of *Babylon* itself, and the utter Desolation that should come upon it, *Isa.* xiv. 22, 23. The Prophet *Jeremiab* foretels the same Destruction and Ruin of *Babylon*, and that with many remarkable Circumstances relating to the taking of the City by the *Medes* and *Persians*, all which were literally accomplished. And this was foretold at a time when *Babylon* was the most powerful Empire in the World, and in the Height of all its Prosperity and Grandeur. This Writer thinks there is nothing in *Jeremiab's* foretelling that *Jerusalem* should be taken and destroyed by the *Chaldeans* at a time when they were so powerful, and the *Jews* so weak, tho' considering the Alliance the *Jews* had with *Egypt* a very potent Kingdom, and whose Interest it was to oppose the *Chaldeans*, it might not be so easy to foresee it as he imagines; but how came that Prophet to foretel that the Captivity of the *Jews* should last *seventy Years*, and that at the End of that fixed time they should be *restored* to their own Country again? *Jer.* xxv. 12. xxix. 10. *Hosea* and *Amos* both foretold the Destruction of *Israel* by the *Assyrians* in the Days of *Jeroboam* the Second, when that Kingdom was in the most flourishing Circumstances it had ever been in, *Hos.* x. 5, 6. *Amos* vii. 10—17. The same Prophet *Amos* also foretold the entire Destruction of *Damascus* and *Syria*, with this Circumstance, that the People should be *carried captive to Kir*; as they actually were by *Tiglath-Pileser* King of *Assyria*, near threescore Years after the Prediction, according to Archbishop *Usher's* Computation, compare *Amos* i. 4, 5. with *1 Kings* xvi. 9. In the Days of King *Abaz* when *Israel* was in Confederacy with *Syria* against *Judab*, and threatened to destroy it, the Prophet *Isaiab* foretold, that *before the Child* he

then had by the Prophets should be able to say *my Father, or my Mother, the Riches of Damascus, and the Spoil of Samaria should be taken away by the King of Assyria, Isa. viii. 3, 4.* And he had before that expressly foretold, that *within three-score and five Years Ephraim should be so destroyed as to be no more a People, Isa. vii. 8.* and how literally that was accomplished, see *Usher's Annales vet. Testam. p. 108.* There are many other most express and circumstantial Predictions in the Prophecies of *Isaiab.* After having given a most lively Description of the Destruction of *Moab* and its chief Cities, he fixes the precise time for it; *the Lord hath spoken, saying, within three Years as the Years of an Hireling, and the Glory of Moab shall be contemned, Isa. xvi. 14.* So also Chap. *xxi. 17.* Thus *hath the Lord said unto me, within a Year according to the Years of an Hireling, and shall all the Glory of Kedar fail, &c.* He expressly foretold not only that *Hezekiah* should recover of his dangerous Sickness, but that God would add *fifteen Years to his Life, Isa. xxxviii. 5, 6.* The desolate State of *Tyre* is precisely determined to *seventy Years, Isa. xxii. 15.* The Prophet *Ezekiel* not only foretels in the strongest Terms the Desolation of *Egypt* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, but expressly declares that *at the End of forty Years God would bring again the Captivity of Egypt; and it should again become a Kingdom; but he adds that it should be a base one, and that it should no longer exalt itself above the Nations; which was exactly accomplished, see Ezek. chap. xxix.*

It were easy to produce more Instances of this Kind out of the prophetical Writings, to which might be added several other wonderful and express Predictions, of which we have an Account in the sacred History. Thus, *e.g.* was it possible for any human Wisdom to foresee that the huge Host of *Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites*, that threatned to swallow up

Judah,

Judab, should on a sudden be destroyed, without the *Jews* fighting in their own Defence; and that they needed only to stand still, and see the *Salvation of God*? And yet this was expressly foretold by a Prophet in the Name of God to *Jeboshaphat* and the Men of *Judab*, when they were overwhelmed with Terror; and it was immediately and wonderfully accomplished, 2 *Chron.* xx. 14, &c. By what human Means could the Prophet *Elisha* reveal to the King of *Israel* the King of *Syria*'s most secret Projects and Counsels; or assure him, when *Samaria* was reduced to the Extremity of Distress by Famine and the Host of the *Syrians*, and no human Succour near, that in *one Day's* time there should be such a Plenty of all Things, as if Provisions had come pouring down upon them from Heaven? These and many other Predictions that might be mentioned are not delivered merely in general ambiguous Terms, as this Writer tells us was usually done to save the Prophet's Credit, but are clear, express, and determinate, applied to particular Circumstances of Time, Place, and Persons, which it was impossible for any Man on Earth by any merely human Sagacity to foresee; many of them contrary to all Appearances, and to all the Rules of human Probability, and which it was absolutely out of the Power of the Prophets themselves to bring about by any natural Means, by which he pretends they often took care to fulfil their own Predictions. In a Word, they were Things which could only be known to him whose Providence governs all Events, and who hath the Times and Seasons, the Events of Nations and particular Persons in his own Hands.

But especially the Prophecies of *Daniel* are highly remarkable, which take in the Fates of so many different Nations for so long a Series of Years, the Succession of four mighty Empires, and the principal Revolutions that were to befall them, in the

the very Order in which they were to happen. Our Author indeed would fain have it believed that *Daniel* flourished in the Reign of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, i. e. 140 Years after the time in which he really lived *. But even on that Supposition his Prophecy

* If we inquire what it is that our Author offers to support so extraordinary a Conjecture, which is entirely contrary to the whole History of the Book of *Daniel*, and to the express Testimony of the Prophet *Ezekiel* who lived in the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, and speaks of *Daniel* as at that time famous for his Wisdom and Piety, *Ezek. xiv. 14. xxviii. 3.* It is no more than this; He affirms, that it is evident, and the Text expressly tells us, that the Decree or Commandment for the building of the City, and Restoration of the People, from which the seventy Weeks are to begin, came out at the very time when *Daniel* was offering up his Prayers and Supplications for the Liberty of his Nation. And this Decree or Commandment for building the City, &c. came forth in the seventh Year of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, at which time therefore *Daniel* must have had his Vision, see p. 337, 339. But not to urge that the *Artaxerxes* in whose Reign this Decree came forth was not *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, but *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, who lived sixty Years before, as is proved among others by *Dr. Prideaux*; I shall only observe, that what this Writer saith is evident from the Text, doth not appear from the Text at all. The Commandment mentioned, *ver. 25.* from which the seventy Weeks are to begin, is expressly said to be the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. But the Commandment mentioned in the 23d Verse, that came forth at the Beginning of *Daniel's* Supplication, is not said to be the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, tho' our Author tells us the Text, and the Angel expressly declare it to be so; but is manifestly to be understood of the Commandment that was given by God to the Angel *Gabriel* to go and make known to *Daniel* those future Events contained in the Prophecy of the seventy Weeks. It is observed, *ver. 20.* that while *Daniel* was speaking in Prayer, *Gabriel* being caused to fly swiftly, touched him, and said, O *Daniel*, I am now come forth to give thee Skill and Understanding; at the Beginning of thy Supplications the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee: therefore understand the Matter, and consider the Vision, that is, at the Beginning of thy Supplications the Commandment came from God to me, ordering me to shew thee what is to come to pass, and accordingly, I am come to make thee understand the Vision. We have an Instance of such a Commandment given to *Gabriel* before in a former Vision,

Prophecy of the *seventy Weeks*, according to our Author's own Computation, would be true: And all his wonderful Predictions concerning the overturning the *Persian Empire* by *Alexander the Great*, and the Division of his Empire into four Kingdoms, and the Wars, Alliances, and principal Transactions between the Kings of *Syria* and *Egypt*, which are related with so amazing a Particularity; and concerning the profaning the Temple, and the Miseries brought upon the *Jews* by

tion, chap. viii. 16. where a Voice came to *Gabriel*, *Make this Man, i. e. Daniel, to understand the Vision*. If the Author who pretends to urge the express Declaration of the Text, will be governed by what is there expressly declared; this Prayer and Supplication of *Daniel* was made in the first Year of *Darius the Mede*, chap. ix. 1, 2. that is, 141 Years before the seventh Year of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, in which according to him the Decree for building and restoring *Jerusalem* came forth. And this is farther confirmed by the Occasion of *Daniel's* Prayer, which is there said to be this, that he understood that the seventy Years spoken of by the Prophet *Jeremiah* for the Continuance of the Desolations of *Jerusalem* were on the Point of being accomplished. But to this our Author hath a short Answer, viz. that the Book of *Daniel*, as we now have it, has been in this Case greatly interpolated and corrupted, as he could demonstrate were this a proper Time and Place for it. p. 338. But upon his Supposition as he puts it, the Book of *Daniel* must not have been merely interpolated. All the historical Part of it which wholly relates to Things done in the Reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belsazzar*, and *Darius the Mede*, must be one entire Forgery. This our Author, no doubt, could demonstrate, if this were a proper Time and Place for it. And I believe the Reader is convinced, that he would have thought any Time and Place proper to have done it, if it had been in his Power. I shall not meddle with his Computation of the seventy Weeks; because tho' he gives a very wrong Account of it, yet according to his own Computation, the Prophecy was literally accomplished. I shall only observe, that in order to bring his Account the better to bear, he tells us that *Daniel* fixes the time when the *Messiah* was to be cut off, to be sixty two Weeks after the coming forth of the Commandment, &c. p. 337. whereas it is plain from the Text, that he reckons seven Weeks and sixty two Weeks, that is, sixty nine Weeks of Years after the coming forth of the Commandment.

Antiochus

Antiochus Epiphanes; as well as concerning the vast Power of the *Roman Empire*, and the utter Destruction of the *Jewish State*, the City, and the Sanctuary, soon after the *Messiah's Coming*. These Things shew the Certainty of Prophecy: and are Instances of an exact and certain Knowledge of future Events that can only be supposed to proceed from God himself, whose Eye penetrateth thro' all Ages, who ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

From these and many other Instances that might be produced, it manifestly appears how vainly this Writer would insinuate, that the Prophecies were nothing more than general conditional Declarations of God's Favour to the Good, and Denunciations of his Judgments against the Wicked, see p. 284, 285. And whereas he pretends that "to humour the People, they were often obliged to deliver many Promises and Declarations of Good to the Nation, in absolute Terms, which were plainly intended as conditional; and therefore as often as they pronounced any Judgments from God, or impending Calamities for the Sins of the Nation, they always promised a future Deliverance, &c." It is evident from the whole of the prophetic Writings, that the pleasing or humouring the People was not what they had in view. They delivered the Message they received from God with a noble Boldness, whether it pleased the Princes and People or not. They often foretold the most dismal Calamities, not merely as Things which they were afraid might happen, but as what would most certainly befall them. And when they foretold a national Deliverance, or a better State of Things, it was not because they thought this necessary to humour the People, but because they knew by the *Spirit of Prophecy* that such a Deliverance would certainly be. Thus it was in the Case of the Return from the *Babylonish Captivity*, and of

Cyrus

Cyrus's letting the Captives go free, both which were most clearly and expressly foretold, tho' they were Events which as thus circumstanced no Man could foresee. And with regard to *other Nations* as well as the *Jews*, the Prophets sometimes after foretelling the Calamities that should befall them, expressly foretel their Restoration and Deliverance; and surely it cannot be pretended that this also was to humour the *Jews*. The only Reason for it was, that they knew by the Spirit of Prophecy, that the Fact would be so. Thus *Jeremiah* foretels the Captivity and Restoration of *Elam*, Jer. xlix. 34—39. and of *Moab*, chap. xlviii. 47. as *Isaiah* doth concerning *Cyrus*, Isa. xxii. 1—7, 18. and *Ezekiel* concerning *Egypt*, Ezek. xxix. 1—13, 14.

With regard to the Prophecies relating to the *Messiah*, he pretends that the *Messiah* spoken of by the Prophets was to be no more than a *temporal Prince*, and his Kingdom of a *worldly Nature*; and that he was only to be a King of the *Jews*, and a national Deliverer and Saviour of them only, and not of the *Gentiles*. And he farther intimates that this Promise of the *Messiah* was only conditional, and suspended upon the *Jews* good Behaviour, as the Promise of the uninterrupted Succession of the Crown in *David's* Family was conditional. The proper Place for considering this will be when I come more particularly to examine the Objections he raises against the New Testament; when I propose to shew, that the Kingdom attributed to the *Messiah* by the Prophets is not merely like the Kingdoms of this World, of a secular Nature, but erected for spiritual Ends and Purposes, and that it is represented by the Prophets as an *universal Benefit*, not confined to the *Jews*, but extending to all Nations. From whence it follows, that the Promise of the *Messiah* was not merely conditional, to depend upon the Repentance and Obedience of the *Jews*; for why should a Benefit designed

signed for Mankind in general, be suspended upon the good Behaviour of the *Jews* only? nor is this Condition ever once mentioned. On the contrary, it is foretold in the Prophecies that when he actually came, the *Jews* would reject him, and use him ill; and that soon after his coming and being cut off, their City and Sanctuary should be destroyed, tho' it is intimated, that afterwards they should seek to him in the latter Days, and be restored to a happy State. This future Conversion of the *Jews*, and a more glorious State of the universal Church than hath hitherto appeared, many of the Prophecies seem to point to: and I doubt not these Prophecies will in their due Season be accomplished, tho' I am sensible that by this, I incur the Author's heavy Censure, who severely inveighs against those that understand the Prophecies in this Sense, as upholding the *Jews* in their Vanity and Presumption.

But to proceed to the farther Reflections he makes upon the Prophets, he observes that by *pretending too much to the Knowledge of future Events*, the *Prophets sometimes told lies in the Name of the Lord, as four hundred of them did at once in the Case of Ahab*. Thus in order to expose the *true* Prophets of God he confounds them with the *false* ones, as if they were to be accountable for all the Falshoods that were ever uttered by any that took upon them the Name of Prophet. It will be easily granted, that there were at that time false Prophets as well as true ones. Some of these might perhaps have been educated in the prophetick Schools under the Discipline of the true Prophets, and under that Pretence took upon them the Character of Prophets, tho' they never had any extraordinary Inspiration, merely for serving their own Ends of Ambition or Avarice. Or there might be *Schools* of Prophets set up under the Countenance of the Kings in opposition to the true ones, whom they hated for their divine Zeal and Impartiality in re-
proving

proving their Faults and Vices. But these Prophets, concerning whom, it is often declared, that God did not send them, and that they prophesied a *false Vision, and the Deceit of their own Heart*, were of a very different Character from the true Prophets of the Lord. They were too complaisant to contradict the Court Religion, or the prevailing fashionable Vices and Humours of the Prince or People. They are represented as very *wicked* themselves, and encouraging the People in their *Wickedness*, see *Jer.* xxiii. 11, 14—17. xxviii. 7. Instead of denouncing Judgments against them for their Crimes, they prophesied of nothing but *Peace* and Prosperity, and soothed and flattered them in their Vices, *Jer.* vi. 14. xiv. 13. *Ezek.* xiii. 10, 16. And they were so far from joining with the true Prophets, that they were their greatest Enemies and Persecutors*, and joined Interests with the corrupt part of the Priesthood against them, and had the People on their side too, because they pleased and flattered them, *Jer.* v. 31. These false Prophets were ready as occasion served, and as they saw it would please the King or People, to prophesy in the Name of the *Lord*, or in the Name of *Baal*, *Jer.* ii. 8. xxiii. 13.

Of this kind were the four hundred Prophets that prophesied falsely to *Abab* in the Name of the Lord. Hence *Micaiah*, the true Prophet of God, represents them as *Abab's* Prophets, and not *God's*. They were such as he himself chose and approved, because they always took care to prophesy what they knew would be acceptable to him. Whereas he hated *Micaiah*, because he dealt impartially with him, and told him the plain Truth. This Author indeed would have it thought that these four hundred Prophets bad him go up to *Ramoth*

* See *Jer.* xx. 2, 6. xxvii. 9, 16. xxviii. 2, 10, 11, 16. xix. 21, 23, 32. 1 *Kings* xxii. 24.

Gilead, with a Design that he should be killed by the Syrians in revenge for the Prophets of the Lord whom he had caused to be slain before. Whereas the Truth is, they only said so, because they knew it would please the King, which was all these Court Prophets had in view, who were always for prophesying smooth and acceptable things. Besides they probably flattered themselves that the King would prove victorious, which seemed far more likely than the contrary, as he had defeated the Syrians in the two last Battles he had fought with them, and now had the King of Judah to assist him. But Micaiah, who was a true Prophet of the Lord, conducted himself after a quite different Manner. He discovers his own Character, and that of all the true Prophets of God in the Answer he made to the King's Messenger, who was for persuading him to speak *that which was good unto the King*, as the other Prophets had done; *as the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak*, 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14. And accordingly he plainly told Abab, that if he went up to Ramoth Gilead he should die. It was impossible for him in a human way to foresee that a Syrian drawing his Bow at a venture, should smite the King of Israel between the Joints of the Harness. No Event could be seemingly more contingent. And Abab took all the Precautions in his Power to prevent it by disguising himself, and getting Jebo-shaphat to put on his Robes. And yet Micaiah speaks of his Death with an absolute Assurance, and pawns his Liberty and Life upon it, ver. 27, 28. he was sure of it, because he was supernaturally inspired with the Knowledge of it by God himself. No Consequence therefore can be drawn from the false Prophets to the true ones; that because there were some that falsely pretended to divine Inspiration, therefore there were none that were really thus inspired. Since in the Instance produced

duced by this Writer, tho' there was a Number of Persons that falsely pretended to the Name of Prophets, yet there was a true Prophet of the Lord, who had the Knowledge of a future Contingency revealed to him in an extraordinary Manner by God himself. The Characters of the false Prophets and the true were entirely different, and it was no hard Matter to distinguish them; not only because of the different *Tendency* of their Doctrines and Predictions, which in the one was to flatter the Kings and People for their own Interest, and to encourage them in their Vices; in the other to reprove them impartially even at the Hazard of their own Lives for their Sins, and to turn them from their evil Ways to real Repentance, and the Practice of Righteousness. But especially because the one were enabled clearly and *certainly* to foretell future Events which no human Knowledge could foresee, and which were exactly accomplished; but the other either spoke only in general ambiguous Terms, or if they undertook to foretell Things future clearly and expressly, were confuted by the Event, as *Abab's* Prophets were. And whenever they pretended to come in Competition with the true Prophets of God, and to contradict their Predictions, God gave his own Prophets a visible *Superiority*, sufficient to convince all that observed of the great Difference between them. This appears in the Instance now mentioned, and in the remarkable Contest between *Hananiab* and *Jeremiab*, of which we have an Account in the 28th Chapter of *Jeremiab*; where *Jeremiab* not only tells him, that the Lord had *not sent him*; but expressly declares, *thus saith the Lord, this Year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught Rebellion against the Lord.* And accordingly he died that Year in the seventh Month, see *ver. 16, 17.* So in the Case of *Abab* and *Zedekiab*, who prophesied Lies in the Name of the Lord, *Jeremiab* foretold the dreadful Punishment

that should be inflicted on them, and even the particular Death they should die; that the King of *Babylon* should cause *them to be roasted in the Fire*, *Jer. xxix. 21—23.*

Thus I have considered the Attempts this Writer makes against the Prophets with Respect to their foretelling Things to come. There is no accounting for their many clear, express, and circumstantial Predictions of future Events in any of those Ways which he mentions, or indeed in any other Way than by supposing them to have the Knowledge of those Things communicated to them in an extraordinary Way by God himself; for it is the peculiar Prerogative of the supreme Being, the most wise Governor of the World, and of Mankind, to know the Things which shall be hereafter. And this is what he challenges to himself as that whereby he is eminently distinguished above all other Beings, *Isa. xli. 22, 23. xlii. 9, 10.*

CHAP. IX.

Some general Reflections on the Attempt the Author makes to shew that the Prophets were the great Disturbers of their Country, and that they were of persecuting Principles, Enemies to Toleration and Liberty of Conscience: It is shewn that they were the truest Friends to their Country, and that if their Counsels had been hearkened to, its Ruin would have been prevented. His Invektive against the Prophet Samuel whom he represents as the Founder of the prophetick Order. His Pretence that he kept Saul twenty Years out of the Exercise of the Royal Power, after he was chosen King. The Account he gives of Samuel's Quarrel against Saul for deposing him from the High-Priesthood, and of the several Plots laid by him for the Destruction of that Prince, especially in the Affair

of the Amalekites, considered. In what Sense it is said that it repented God that he had made Saul King. That this was not a Pretence of Samuel to cast his own Follies and Want of Foresight upon the Almighty. David's Character considered and vindicated: His Behaviour towards Saul shewn to be noble and generous. Notwithstanding the Faults he was guilty of, in his general Conduct he was an excellent Person. Concerning his Dancing before the Ark; the Author's base Representation of it. Lord S—y's Account of it, and of the Saltant naked Spirit of Prophecy, considered.

LET us now proceed to what our Author offers against the moral Character of the Prophets, and particularly the Attempt he makes to shew that they were the great Incendiaries and Disturbers of their Country for above three hundred Years, and at length proved its Ruin. This is the Substance of his long Invective for above thirty Pages together from p. 291. to p. 323. It is evident he intends all this merely against those that are represented in Scripture as the true Prophets of the Lord. For the false ones, who always took care for their own Interest to be of the King's Religion, and never reprov'd them or the People for their Vices and Idolatries, do not come under his Accusation. And he speaks of Baal's Prophets with great Complacency, as Men of benevolent Dispositions, and Friends to Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience.

But before I enter on a distinct Consideration of this Writer's Invective, I cannot but make this general Remark upon it; how inconsistent he is with himself in the Account he gives of the Prophets and their Conduct. He represents them as Persons that by their original Institution were to live in a low abstemious way, retired from the World

without Ambition or Avarice, and wholly devoted to Contemplation and Study. That they were never to involve themselves in secular Affairs, to push at Fortune, or to make any great Figure or splendid Appearance in the World. - And again he talks of their absolute Retirement and Recess from the Business and Pleasures of the World. And yet the same Author that gives this Account of them, represents them as continually engaged in all the Disturbances and Revolutions of the State, raising numberless Rebelions and Commotions, able to turn out one Royal Family, and place another upon the Throne at Pleasure. And what makes this still more extraordinary is, that by his own Account these Prophets must have had very little Interest. He represents the Kings as engaged in a perpetual Struggle and Contest with them; and that the Priests generally hated them, for declaiming against them, and endeavouring to keep the People to the Moral Law, and take them off from their superstitious Dependance upon Sacrifices and Absolutions; and that herein the People were generally in the Interest of the Priests, p. 304. And to this it may be added, that the false Prophets who were countenanced by the Kings, and who joined Interests with the Priests, and flattered and pleased the People, opposed and hated the true Prophets of the Lord. Now this being the Case; that a few Men bred up in Colleges and Places of Retirement, without Ambition or Avarice, retired from the Noise of the World, and devoted to Study and Contemplation, and who had the Kings, the Priests, the pretended Prophets and Body of the People against them, should yet have it in their Power to overturn Kingdoms, to raise perpetual Insurrections and Commotions, and to transfer the Crown, when they pleased, from one Royal Family to another, without Money, without Interest, without Force, yea, all these engaged in an Opposition to them, is a Supposition so wild and

and extravagant, that one would think scarce any Man in his Senses was capable of admitting it. But there is nothing that has a wider Swallow than *Infidelity*, which tho' it makes the slightest Difficulty on the side of Revelation an insuperable Objection, can admit the most absurd and unaccountable Suppositions in the World in Favour of a darling Scheme.

The general Charge he advances against the Prophets, and which he supposes to lie at the Foundation of all the *Commutations* and *Insurrections*, the *religious Wars* and *Massacres* of which he accuses them, is their Zeal against *Idolatry*, which he represents as if they were utter Enemies to all Toleration and religious Liberty. And on the other hand he commends the Kings that are branded in Scripture for their Wickedness and Idolatry as only maintaining Indulgence, Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience.

That by the Law of *Moses* there was to be no Toleration of Idolatry in the Commonwealth of *Israel*, is very true, and has been already accounted for. They were not indeed brought under an Obligation to endeavour to extirpate Idolatry in all other Countries by Fire and Sword, as this Writer represents it, but they were not to suffer it in their own. *Idolatry* was the most express Breach of the original Contract or Covenant between God and them, by which they held the Land of *Canaan*, and all their Privileges, as a peculiar People, and as a Subverting the whole Constitution. The Kings therefore whom this Author honours with the glorious Title of the *Friends* of Toleration and Liberty of Conscience (tho' I shall shew they were far from proceeding upon this Principle, except Toleration be meant a Liberty for Idolatry, but not for the true Worship of God) were really guilty of subverting the fundamental Laws, and were the greatest *Enemies* to their Country, and

took the readiest way to expose it to the greatest Miseries and Calamities, which had in that case been expressly threatned in the Original Covenant. And those that at the hazard of all that was dear to them stood up for the antient Constitution, established by the express Command and Authority of God himself, and bore Testimony against that prevailing Idolatry and Wickedness, which they knew tended to dissolve and ruin the State, and bring Captivity and Desolation upon Princes and People, shewed themselves the truest *Patriots*, and discovered a noble Zeal for the Welfare, the Glory, and Prosperity of their Country. But when we farther consider them as extraordinarily sent and commissioned by God himself for that Purpose, this surely doth fully justify them. When with a noble and impartial Zeal they reprov'd Kings, and the greatest Men, for their Idolatry and other Vices, and foretold the dreadful Judgments and Calamities that would be inflicted on them without Reformation and Repentance, in all this they only executed the Commission which God intrusted them with, and delivered the Messages which he sent them upon. And if this Author will undertake to prove that it was unjust in God to inflict those Judgments on wicked and idolatrous Kings, and on a sinful and rebellious People, he will do something; but if it was not wrong in God to inflict them, it was not wrong in the Prophets to denounce them, when he sent them to do it in his Name. And indeed his raising up a *Succession* of Prophets to give them such solemn Warnings, and exhort them to Repentance, and enabling them clearly and expressly to foretel the Calamities that should befall them and their Kings, whereby when they came to pass they might know that they were sent upon them in a way of Judgment for their Sins. This was a signal Instance of the divine Mercy towards a guilty People, and shewed what proper Method

he took to prevent that Destruction which they were bringing upon themselves. And if the Body of the People and their Kings still continued incorrigible under all the Methods made use of by divine Providence to reclaim them, both by the Judgments inflicted on them, and the many signal Mercies and Deliverances he vouchsafed them from time to time, and which were also expressly foretold by the Prophets he sent to warn them in his Name, this only shewed how just it was at length to inflict upon them that utter Ruin and Captivity, which had been so long threatned, and which they had so well deserved. But to lay this their Ruin to the Charge of the Prophets, and to represent them as the Cause of all their Miseries is the most unjust Thing in the World, when the very contrary to this is manifestly true, that if their faithful Counsels, their solemn Warnings, and earnest Exhortations had been hearkened unto, and complied with, the Destruction of that People had been prevented. And it was the rejecting their wholesome and excellent Admonitions that brought Misery and Ruin on *that ancient and famous Nation*, as our Author calls them, p. 320. which is the only Place in his Book where he seems to speak honourably of the *Jews*, with a view to lay the greater Load upon the Prophets for causing their Ruin.

But let us now proceed to the Instance he brings to make good his general Charge.

He first falls into a furious Inveective against the Prophet *Samuel*, whom he represents as the Founder of the prophetic Order. By his own Account, his Design in instituting that Order was to *restore Learning and Virtue, to keep the People to the moral Law, and to restrain the Vices both of Priests and People*: He represents him as endeavouring to retrieve as much *Wisdom and Knowledge* as he could from its antient Ruins, and taking care that the Prophets should be instructed and educated in it: and tells us that the proper *Business and Design of their*

Institution and Order was to preach up moral Truth and Righteousness. One would think the Author of this *most wise and excellent Constitution*, as he himself calls it, must have been a wise and excellent Person. It is true, that after giving this account of the Institution of the prophetick Order, he pretends, p. 292. to let us into a farther view of *Samuel's Design* in that Institution. He tells us, that upon the People's desiring a King, *Samuel* who saw *the Revolution that must soon happen in the State*, instituted this academick Order of Prophets, who by their *Weight and Influence with the People*, were to moderate and restrain the Power of the Kings, and at the same time keep the Princes and People too within the Boundaries of the moral Law. Thus those Prophets who according to our Author were no more than Moralists and Philosophers, or Preachers of moral Truth and Righteousness, and who by their Institution were wholly devoted to Contemplation and Study, and never to involve themselves in secular Affairs; These Men were at the same time instituted and designed to hold the Balance in the State, and to govern Kings and People as they pleased. One would think by this Representation that they were invested with a Power like that of the *Ephori*, among the the *Lacedemonians*. But then he should have supposed them like those *Ephori*, the first Men in the State, at the Head of all Affairs, and not a mere Order of *Academicks*, Men devoted to Study and Philosophy, and that were never to concern themselves in State Affairs at all. This may give the Reader a Specimen of our Author's profound Skill in *Politics*, and how well qualified he is for forming Plans for Republicks, and Schemes of Government. However one should think that it was an excellent Design if it could be effected, and what all the States in the World should wish for, to have an Order of Persons among them, that might keep the Princes and People too within the Boundaries of the

moral Law. Still *Samuel's* Design even upon this Representation of it was very good. But the Author who has hitherto observed some Measures with regard to *Samuel*, soon throws off all Disguise, and represents him as engaged in restless Attempts to destroy his King, and ruin his Country; as carrying on a Series of wicked Frauds, Treasons, and Conspiracies for gratifying his own Ambition and Resentment; and sanctifying all with the Pretence of Religion, and the holy Name of God. It is thus that this spiteful Writer abuses and calumniates one of the brightest Characters in Scripture, and one of the most excellent Governors we read of in History. As a *Prophet* he was so eminent, that we are told that even whilst he was yet young, the *Lord was with him, and did not let one of his Words fall to the Ground*; so that all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that *Samuel was established to be a Prophet of the Lord*, 1 Sam. iii. 19—21. As a *Governour* he not only delivered his Country from their most dangerous Enemies and Oppressors, but after he had governed them many Years to his Old Age, was able to appeal to the whole Nation, whether he had in any one single Instance defrauded or oppressed any of them, or been guilty of the least Corruption or Wrong. And nothing could be more glorious than the Testimony that was given by the united Suffrage of all the People, joined with a solemn Appeal to God himself, concerning the untainted Integrity, Justice, and Clemency he had shewn in the whole Course of his Administration, see 1 Sam. xii. 1—5. And accordingly not only was he universally respected by the whole Nation when alive, and lamented when dead, 1 Sam. xxv. 1. but his Memory was always had in great Veneration among them. Nor is he ever spoken of by any Writer of that Nation, but with the highest Esteem and Admiration for his Piety and Virtue. And yet our Author does his utmost to traduce him as a Monster of

of Pride, Ambition, Falshood and Revenge. He represents this excellent Man, who on all Occasions shewed such a Love to his Country and a Zeal for its Welfare, as *having little Compassion for his Country*, in its greatest Calamity, and *beholding the Devastation of it by the Philistines, not only with Indifference but with Pleasure*, in hopes that the King whom he himself had recommended to the People should be destroyed. And when he speaks of the Victories Saul obtained over the Enemies of his Country, and his *settling the Nation in Peace*, he represents this as done to the *great Mortification of this Prophet*, and in *spite of all the Opposition of Samuel and the Prophets*; see p. 295, 296, 298. Yea he descends so low in his Invectives, as to insinuate that *Samuel* caused the Asses of *Saul's* Father to be stolen, and so was able to *tell Saul what had betided them*, p. 305. It would be honouring such mean and spiteful Reflections too much to give them a particular Answer, which have not the least Pretence from History to support them, and only shew the determined Hatred and Malice of this Writer against the Man whom he supposes to have been the Father and Founder of the Prophets.

I shall only take notice of those Reflections which he pretends to support from the Account given us in the History itself. Thus he most absurdly pretends, that after *Saul* was chosen King at *Mizpah*, *Samuel* presently sent him Home again, where he lived a private Life for at least twenty Years, whilst *Samuel* really exercised the regal Power. And that it was upon the occasion of the *Ammonites* besieging *Jabesh Gilead*, and the Success *Saul* obtained against them, that he was invested with *the real State, Power, and Grandeur of a King*, because the People would have it so; and *Samuel* against his own Inclination was under a Necessity to comply with it. And “ that this must not have been less
“ than twenty Years after *Saul* had been first
“ anointed,

" anointed, he says is plain, because *Saul* when first
 " anointed was but a young Man, as the Text
 " tells us, and *Josephus* saith he was then thirty,
 " and therefore *Jonathan* then could be but a
 " Child, but now *Jonathan* was grown up an ex-
 " pert Soldier, and the chief Captain under the
 " King," p. 294. But if this Writer will govern
 himself by the Chronology of *Josephus*, the besieging
 of *Jabesh Gilead* by the *Ammonites* was but a
 Month after *Saul's* Inauguration at *Mizpab*, tho'
 our Author makes it to be no less than twenty
 Years. And that this was in some antient Copies
 of the Books of *Samuel*, or at least was an antient
 Tradition among the *Jews*, may well be supposed,
 since the *Septuagint* have it in their Translation of
 1 Sam. xi. 1. Then *Nahash the Ammonite came up*
about a Month after, &c. *ὡς μὲν*, and that it could
 be but a short time, is evident because it appears
 from what *Samuel* saith to the People of *Israel*,
 1 Sam. xii. 12. that the War which *Nahash the*
Ammonite threatened them with, was the imme-
 diate Occasion of their desiring a King to reign over
 them. And accordingly the first Action we read
 of after *Saul's* being chosen King, is that *Nahash*
the Ammonite came up and incamped against Jabesh
Gilead, the Inhabitants of which thereupon sent to
Saul for Assistance and Relief. The solemn Re-
 newal and Confirmation of the Kingdom to *Saul* at
Gilgal, which followed immediately upon the Vic-
 tory he obtained on that Occasion, appears plainly
 to have been done at *Samuel's* own Motion, tho'
 our Author thinks proper to represent it as if it was
 very much against his Inclination, and because the
 People forced him to it, see 1 Sam. xi. 14. If
 therefore this Writer's Observation was right, that
 at the time of renewing the Kingdom to *Saul* at
Gilgal with the universal Consent of the People,
 which was immediately after the Affair at *Jabesh*
Gilead, *Jonathan* was grown up and become an ex-
 pert

per Soldier, it would only follow that *Saul* at the Time of his being first anointed King by *Samuel* at *Ramah* was several Years above thirty, which is the Age that *Josephus* assigns him according to our Author, tho' I have not found it so in *Josephus* himself. But he objects, that the Text tells us that *Saul* was then but a *young Man*. But the Word in the Original which our Translators there render a *choice young Man*, צעיר properly signifies no more than a *choice Man*, and so it is sometimes rendered by our Translators, as in 2 *Sam.* vi. 2. where it is made to signify the *chosen Men* of *Israel*. The Words which are more peculiarly used in Scripture to signify young Men, are not applied to *Saul* at all. Or if they were, he might have been forty Years old for all that; as is plain from the Instance of *Rehoboam* who is called a *young Man* צעיר. And yet it is certain that he was then one and forty Years old. Compare 2 *Chron.* xii. 13. with Chap. xiii. 7. But we need not suppose *Saul* so old. The first Time that *Jonathab* is mentioned is 1 *Sam.* xiii. 2. where *Saul* is represented as giving him the Command of a *thousand Men*. And it appears from the first Verse of that Chapter that this was two Years at least, probably three (if we take the *one Year* and *the two Years* there mentioned as distinct from one another) after his solemn Confirmation at *Gilgal*. So that if we suppose *Saul* to have been no more than *thirty four* when he was first anointed by *Samuel* at *Ramah*, which was some Time before his Inauguration at *Mizpah*, as that was some Time before the Renewal and Confirmation of his Kingdom at *Gilgal*, he must be at the Time when *Jonathab* is first mentioned near *thirty eight*; and supposing *Saul* to have had *Jonathab* when he was *eighteen*, which is far from being an absurd Supposition, then *Jonathab* at the Time referred to might be *twenty Years* old, an Age sufficient for martial Exploits. The great *Alexander* was but twenty when he came

to the Throne, and shewed himself, to use our Author's Phrase, *an expert Soldier* in many Wars in which he was immediately engaged: and he had distinguished himself in an extraordinary Manner before this at the Battle of *Chavonea*, when he was but a little above eighteen Years old: and when he was but sixteen he was left by his Father his Lieutenant in *Macedonia*, and signalized himself by glorious military Exploits at the Head of an Army, as *Plutarch* informs us. And if we suppose *Jonathan* to have been as forward as *Alexander* was, then we need not suppose *Saul* at his being first anointed, to have been much above the Age assigned to him as this Author tells us by *Josephus*, and which he himself seems to approve, and so his mighty chronological Computation with all he builds upon it, falls to the Ground.

This Writer next pretends to give us the true Reason of the Quarrel between *Samuel* and *Saul*. It was "because after the Kingdom was confirmed to him, he deposed *Samuel* from the *High Priesthood* which he had usurped, and put in *Abia* who was the right Heir from *Eli*, which so highly exasperated the Prophet, that from that time he projected the Ruin of *Saul* and his Family, and was resolved to convince the King, that no King of *Israel* must ever pretend to reign independent of the prophetick Order." Now all this which he gives us for his Story is purely a *Fiction* of his own. He says it is plain from the History that *Samuel* had taken upon him the *High-Priesthood*: and yet there is not one Word of this in the whole History of *Samuel*. It is plain indeed from the History that *Samuel* was a *Prophet*, and that he judged the People. But the Office of Judge was entirely distinct from the *High-Priesthood*, nor had there been any one of the Judges that was an *High-Priest* except *Eli*. The first time that mention is made of *Abia* is *1 Sam. xiv. 3*. where he is mentioned

as the *High Priest*, and is plainly supposed to have been so before; but of his being made High-Priest by *Saul*, or of *Samuel's* being deposed from that Office there is not the least Hint given. So that all this which lies at the Foundation of his Invektive against *Samuel* is his own Invention, and only shews how ready he is to forge History, when he cannot find it for his Purpose.

The Account he gives, *p. 296, 297* is writ in the same Spirit. After mentioning a *Battle* and a *complete Victory* gained by the *Philistines*, of which the History saith nothing at all, he proceeds to tell us, that “*Saul* waited seven Days for *Samuel*, who
“ had promised to come to him: and the seven
“ Days being out, he ordered Sacrifices to implore
“ the divine Protection against so formidable an
“ Enemy, &c. and that as soon as *Saul* had done
“ this, *Samuel* who had lain by as unconcerned be-
“ fore, came and charged the King with a great
“ Act of Wickedness and Disobedience, as hav-
“ ing invaded the *Priestly Office*, for which he
“ declared in the Name of the Lord, that the King
“ had forfeited his Crown and Kingdom.” But it is no way probable that *Saul* stayed till the seven Days were out, or quite expired, but rather that thro’ Rashness or Impatience, on the seventh Day he began to offer Sacrifices. If he had staid but a little longer, *Samuel* would have come according to his Promise, who was then upon the way, and came when *Saul* had just offered the *Burn-Offerings*, before he had time to offer the *Peace-Offerings*, as he had intended to do. Nor doth it appear from the Text that *Samuel* charged *Saul* with Wickedness in invading the *Priestly Office*, or that this was the Crime by which he had forfeited his Crown and Kingdom. For it is not improbable there were Priests with him by whom he might offer Sacrifices. But the Fault he is charged with is this, that he had disobeyed the express Command

of God himself, see 1 Sam. xiii. 13. Samuel said to him, *Thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the Commandment of the Lord thy God which he commanded thee.* And he repeats this Charge again in the next Verse. There had been an express Command delivered to him by Samuel in the Name of God, injoining him to go to *Gilgal*, and not to offer Burnt-Offerings or Peace-Offerings till Samuel came with Directions to him from God himself, to shew him what he was to do. This Command had been laid upon him when he was first anointed King, see 1 Sam. x. 8. and undoubtedly it had been renewed to him on this Occasion; and he had been told that now was the Time come for his obeying what had been enjoined him so long before. And this shewed that the Command was of Importance, and that there were some particular Reasons for it, tho' we cannot pretend at this Distance to say distinctly what those Reasons were, as the Text doth not inform us of them. However supposing it to have been an express Command from God delivered to Saul by a true Prophet of the Lord sent and inspired by him, and that Saul himself knew and believed it to be so, then his not fulfilling it was evidently a Fault, if Disobedience to God be so. Now this was really the Case. All Israel knew that Samuel was a true Prophet of the Lord, and that God did not let any of his Words fall to the Ground, 1 Sam. iii. 19, 20. And Saul had particular Reason to know it, both from the several convincing Proofs he himself had of Samuel's divine Inspiration when he anointed him to be King over Israel at *Ramah*, and from what had since happened when the Kingdom was confirmed to him at *Gilgal*, at which time God gave Testimony to Samuel from Heaven in a most extraordinary Manner before Saul and the whole People of Israel, 1 Sam. xii. 6—19. Saul had hitherto had the highest Proofs of Samuel's own particular Good-will and Friendship

ship to him (the Author's Insinuations to the contrary are perfectly vain and groundless) nor does it appear that he had the least Doubt concerning *Samuel's* being a true Prophet, and that what he enjoined him in this Matter as from God was the Command of God himself. Accordingly, when charged with not keeping the Commandment which God *had commanded him*, tho' he lays hold on all the Pretences he can to excuse himself, he doth not so much as once insinuate that he did not know, or was not sure that God had commanded it. And this being the Case, he ought not on any Pretence whatsoever to have violated what he knew to be God's express Command to him, and a Command given to him at the very Time when he was first anointed King, and since repeated in the Name of God. And if the Circumstances were trying and difficult, which was all that he had to alledge for himself by way of Excuse, this was the Time for shewing his Obedience, and waiting patiently with a steddy Trust and Dependance upon God according to his Appointment, in which Case the Prophet assures him his Kingdom would have been established. Whereas now he lets him know, his Kingdom should not continue, but another should be appointed in his stead, because he had not kept that which the Lord commanded him. But the Sentence pronounced against him seems not to have been as yet absolute and peremptory. It was not till his Disobedience in the Affair of *Amalek* that he was absolutely rejected. Nor is it true as this Writer tells us, that *Samuel* now left him, *with a Resolution never to see his Face more*, of which the Text saith nothing at all. On the contrary we are informed that *Samuel* went from *Gilgal* to *Gibeab*, the Place of *Saul's* usual Residence. And there we find *Saul* and *Jonathan*, and the rest of the People got together immediately after. Nor is there any Likelihood that *Samuel* would have gone to that Place if he

had

had intended utterly to abandon *Saul*, and never to see him more.

With regard to the Expedition against *Amalek*, our Author goes on in his wonted Strain of Misrepresentation and Calumny. He represents it as evident that the sending *Saul* against the *Amalekites*, was a Plot laid by the Prophet for the King's Destruction: and that therefore he ordered, that the Soldiers should have no Part of the Booty or Plunder, with an Intention that the King should fall a Sacrifice to the enraged Soldiery; and that being disappointed in this, he went off in a Rage, and privately anointed *David*, p. 298, 299. Here our Author very wisely takes it for granted, that *Samuel* had no Command from God at all to bid *Saul* go and destroy *Amalek*; but that he only feigned or pretended it. And if you will but grant him the very Thing in Question, viz. that what *Samuel* and the other Prophets delivered in the Name of God, as by immediate Inspiration from him, was not from God at all, but purely a Fiction of their own, to colour over their own Designs, and gratify their own Passions, then this sagacious Author will prove, what will be easily granted him on such a Supposition, that he and they were false, wicked and designing Men. But if *Samuel* had an express Revelation from God, enjoining him to order *Saul* to go and extirpate the *Amalekites*, and if *Saul* himself believed it to be so, then the Case is quite altered. And thus it is represented in the History given us of this Matter. Indeed the Command, with regard to the Extirpation of *Amalek*, was no new Thing; it was as old as the Law. The Sentence had been pronounced against them with the greatest Solemnity long ago. They had attacked the *Israelites* immediately after their coming out of *Egypt*, without the least Provocation, in the most barbarous and cruel Manner, and in open Defiance of the Power and Majesty of God himself,

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which

which had been so illustriously displayed in bringing them out of *Egypt*, with Signs and Wonders, and an out-stretched Arm. For this, and no doubt for their other Iniquities, which like those of the *Canaanites* were very great, tho' not particularly mentioned on this Occasion, Judgment was then pronounced against them, *Exod. xvii. 14. Deut. xxv. 17, 18.* But God had forbore the Execution of it for a long Time, about *four hundred Years*. And we may justly suppose, that it was not till the Measure of their Iniquities was full, and the great Wickedness of the present Generation of *Amalekites*, joined to that of their Ancestors *, had rendred them ripe for an exemplary Vengeance, that he saw fit that the Sentence that had been pronounced against them so long before, should be actually executed upon them. And it was his Will that it should be executed by that People whom they had at first so grievously injured, and whom they had often since invaded. See *Judg. iii. 13. vi. 3, 33. vii. 12. x. 12.* And that it might appear, that this War was undertaken, not from a Desire of Spoil, but purely in Obedience to God's Command, and in Execution of his just Sentence, they were not to take any of the *Amalekites* Goods to themselves, and to their own Use, but utterly to destroy all that belonged to them, as had been done in the Case of *Jericho*.

Saul and the People do not appear to have had the least Doubt of its being a divine Command; they knew the Sentence that had been pronounced against *Amalek* in the Law itself, and which therefore came to them confirmed by the same glorious Attestation which confirmed *Moses*' divine Mission, and the divine Original of the

* Hence they are called, in the Command given to *Saul*, *Sinners the Amalekites*, to signify that they were Sinners above the common Rate, *1 Sam. xv. 17.*

Laws he gave; besides which they had a *fresh* Command given them to this Purpose, from God himself, by the Mouth of one whom they all believed and knew to be a true Prophet of the Lord. And accordingly, *Saul*, when endeavouring afterwards to justify or excuse himself, expressly calls it the *Commandment of the Lord*, 1 Sam. xv. 13. This then is the true State of the Case, — *Saul* believed that God had expressly commanded him to extirpate the *Amalekites*, in Execution of his just Sentence against that wicked People, and to destroy all that belonged to them, without sparing or reserving any Part of the Spoil. Accordingly he undertook to execute the Sentence, and yet in plain Opposition to it, not only out of Pride and Ostentation, as it should seem, spared *Agag*, the King of the *Amalekites*, who by what is said of him, v. 35. appears to have been a merciless Tyrant, and probably deserved Death as much, or more, than any of the People, but reserved *all that was good* among the Spoil; and at the same Time, that he might seem to obey the divine Command, took Care to destroy utterly every Thing that was vile and refuse, that is, that was not worth keeping, and could be of no Profit, v. 9. This was base Hypocrisy, and a presumptuous evading an express Command of God, not from any Scruple he had of its being a divine Command; for this he believed; nor from a Principle of Mercy and Compassion, for this would have carried him to have spared not so much the Sheep and Oxen as the People, all of whom he destroyed that he could meet with, except *Agag*, who was probably one of the worst among them; but from a base avaritious Principle. And when his Disobedience was charged upon him, he first stood upon it that he had *exactly* obeyed the divine Command, tho' he knew he had not done it; and afterwards pretended that he had reserved these Spoils, that out of them he might

offer *Sacrifices* to God; and lastly, when he was driven out of his other Excuses, meanly laid it upon the Fear he stood in of the *People*, v. 15, 21, 24. When the Truth is he had Authority enough to have restrained the People if he had pleased. And this Prince, who pretended to be afraid to destroy the Spoil belonging to the *Amalekites* for Fear of offending the People, tho' he had an express Command of God for it, was not afraid utterly to destroy *Nob*, the City of the Priests, with all the Inhabitants, of every Sex and Age, and even the Oxen, Asses, and Sheep, merely to satisfy his own cruel Jealousy and Revenge, tho' it was a Thing so displeasing to the People, that his own Guards and Servants refused to execute it; and he was obliged to get *Doeg* the *Edomite* to do it. See *Cb.* xxii. 18, 19. This may let us into this Prince's Character, who seems to be a great Favourite of our Author; probably in Opposition to the Sacred Writings, because he is there represented as an ill Man. And *Saul* himself was so conscious of his Guilt and base Conduct in the Affair of the *Amalekites*, that after finding that all his Excuses and fair Pretences were detected, he at length confesses without Disguise, that he had sinned, and in Effect acknowledges, that he had deserved the Sentence then pronounced against him by *Samuel*, in the Name of God; and only desires that *Samuel* would honour him before the Elders of the People, and before *Israel*, and would turn again with him to worship the Lord his God, v. 30. which upon this his ingenuous Acknowledgment he consented to do. And this seems to shew that all this had passed between *Samuel* and *Saul* privately, and that it is not true, as this Writer represents it, that *Samuel* denounced the Ruin of *Saul* and his Family before all the People.

It is on this Occasion that we are told, that *repented* God that he had made *Saul* King over *Israel*.

rael. But our Author tells us, that it was Samuel only that repented it, whom he therefore charges with bringing God himself to Repentance, and charging his own Follies, and Want of Foresight, upon the Almighty. And the Proof he brings for it is, that it would be most absurd and senseless to imagine, that God did not know, when Saul was made King, what would happen, but it is plain that Samuel did not know, p. 295, 297. This Sneer is not so much designed against Samuel, as against the Scriptures in general, in which this Phrase of God's repenting is sometimes used, tho' never with a Design to insinuate, that God was ignorant of the Event before. But after all this Author's Bluster, I do not see but that, upon his own Principles, God may be said literally to repent. For if nothing can be certainly foreknown but what is necessary, and depends upon necessary Causes, as he seems plainly to assert, p. 332. which manifestly implies a Denial of God's Prescience of future Contingencies, then supposing that Saul's Actions were free, and depended upon his own free Choice, God himself might not be able certainly to foresee how Saul would act after he was made King. Except this Author will say, that Saul was under a Necessity of doing as he did, and that his Actions were Necessary, and depended on necessary Causes; and how this is consistent with that human Liberty and free Agency for which he professes so great a Zeal, I cannot see. But this is not an Absurdity chargeable on the sacred Writings, which every where go upon the Supposition of God's foreknowing future Events, yea even those that are most contingent, and in which the Liberty of Man is as much exercised and concerned, as in any Events or Actions whatsoever. When therefore God is represented as repenting of a Thing in Scripture, it cannot be the Intention of this Phrase, as there used, to insinuate that God was ignorant of the Event before. But

because when Men repent of a Thing they alter their *Course of acting*, therefore God's changing his Method of Procedure or Course of acting, with regard to Nations, or particular Persons, from shewing them Favour to punishing them, or the contrary, is in Accommodation to *human* Infirmitie represented under the Notion of repenting; tho' this very Change was what he perfectly knew from the Beginning, but did not take Effect till the proper Time came for manifesting his Purpose. So in the present Case, when God is represented as saying to *Samuel*, *it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be King; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my Commandments*, Ch. xv. 11. the Meaning is no more than this, to signify that God was determined to change his Conduct towards *Saul*, and as he had raised him to be King, so now he would reject him from being King for his Disobedience: which Disobedience God had foreseen from the beginning, as he foresees all the Iniquities Men will be guilty of; yet he does not change his Conduct towards them till they are actually guilty of those Sins that deserve the Punishment. But certainly it would be absurd to suppose that *Samuel* intended by this Phrase to insinuate, that God did not foreknow what was to happen, which would be utterly to destroy all Prophecy, and consequently his own Reputation as a Prophet. Accordingly this Phrase of God's *repenting* that he had made *Saul* to be King is explained by his *rejecting* him from being King, compare Ch. xv. 11, 23, 26, 35. xvi. 1. But to cut short this Writer's Pretences, that it was *Samuel* himself that repented, and put his own Repentance upon God, I would observe, that whereas God is twice represented as *repenting* of having made *Saul* King, Ch. xv. 11, 35. in both those Passages we are expressly told how grievous *Saul's* Rejection was to *Samuel*, and the great Trouble

and Sorrow it gave him. In the first of those Passages it is said, that it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all Night. And in the second, that Samuel mourned for Saul. The Sentence he pronounced against that Prince, was far from being the Effect of any personal Enmity or Resentment he had against him; on the contrary he loved Saul, and would have done any Thing in his Power to have obtained a Reversal of the Sentence against him. He offered up his Prayers and Cries and Tears, but all in vain. And whereas this Writer represents it as if immediately, as soon as the Affair of the Amalekites was over, he went off in a Rage for being disappointed of the Design he had formed for Saul's Ruin, and privately anointed David; the History plainly intimates, that he continued to mourn for Saul a considerable Time, and even carried his Grief so far as to incur a Reproof from God on the Account of it. And it was not till he had an exprefs Command from God himself to do it, that he anointed David, Ch. xvi. 1. What our Author adds concerning Samuel's managing Matters so as to bring David into Saul's Family, where he married the King's Daughter, is, like many other Things, entirely his own Invention: since in the History, the first introducing David into Saul's Family, is expressly attributed to Saul's own Servants, who recommended David to him, as one well-skilled in Musick, and otherwise an accomplished Person, to divert his Melancholy, Ch. xvi. 17, 18. Nor is there the least Hint given that Samuel had ever any Thing to do in David's following Advancement by Saul. Nor can it reasonably be supposed, since he never concerned himself with Saul, or his Family afterwards to the Day of his Death, Ch. xv. 35. It is well that Samuel died before Saul, or else our Author would certainly have found some Way to have charged his Death upon that Prophet, and would have

contrived that *Samuel* should send him into the Field of Battle to be killed by the *Philistines*.

Our moral Philosopher next falls upon *David*; and there is no Person in his whole Book that he seems to have a more peculiar Spite and Malice against than that great and heroick Prince. I suppose, because he was an eminent Prophet as well as King, and the Penman of a very valuable Part of the sacred Writings, which hath been always had in great Esteem.

He tells us, that “ The Crown was cut off
“ from *Israel*, and entailed upon *Judah*, by a long
“ Train of Falshoods, Perjuries, Diffimulations,
“ Ingratitude, Treason, and at last open Rebel-
“ lion; and that *David* acted in Opposition to all
“ his former Vows and Protestations of Loyalty,
“ p. 299. And after having mentioned several
“ Sins and Vices, such as open profane Swearing,
“ execrable Curses, and most abominable Lies,
“ Lusts, and Whoredoms, Breach of the most
“ solemn Oaths and Alliances, Cruelty, and
“ Blood-thirstiness, contrary to all the Laws of
“ Nature and Nations, he saith, that all these *Da-*
“ *vid* himself had been most remarkable for. And
“ that yet he is represented by the Prophets, as a
“ Man after God’s own Heart, and as having
“ walked uprightly with the Lord, saving only in
“ the Case of *Uriah the Hittite*.” And he as-
firms, that “ The *Jews*, even in their most dege-
“ nerate Times, could not be charged with any
“ Vice, or moral Wickedness, which had not
“ been approved and justified in *David*, their
“ great Patron and Exemplar,” p. 323, 324.
And again, that “ The Prophets justify and ex-
“ tol *David*’s Character, and set up his Example
“ as worthy to be imitated by all future Princes
“ tho’ he had been the most bloody Persecutor
“ that ever had been known, and his whole Life
“ had been one continued Scene of Diffimulation
“ Falshood

"Falshood, Lust, and Cruelty. But his rooting out Idolatry, and destroying Idolaters by Fire and Sword wherever he came, made Atonement for all, and canonized him as the great Saint and Idol both of the Prophets and Priests."

p. 334. Another Reason for which he makes to be, that "He at least doubled the *Revenues* of the Priests, to what they had been settled by *Moses*, and obliged the People to bring their Sacrifices to *Jerusalem*; which was a Servitude the other Tribes could not bear, who only waited for a fair Opportunity to break the Yoke of *Judah*." p. 300.

Such is the Fate of this great Prince. He complains in many of his *Psalms* of false and calumnious Tongues, that persecuted him whilst he was alive, with unjust and cruel *Reproaches*: And now at the Distance of so many Ages, the same Spirit of envenomed Malice and Bitterness appears against his Memory, and shoots *Arrows* against him, even bitter Words. One would think by this Author's Representation of him, that he was one of the worst Men that ever lived upon the Earth, and hardly to be equalled by a *Nero*, or a *Domitian*.

He first charges him with having obtained the Crown, By a long Train of Falshoods, Perjuries, Diffimulation, Ingratitude, Treason, and at last open Rebellion. p. 299. But the contrary of all this is so true, that nothing can possibly give us a higher Idea of *David's* eminent and heroick Virtues than his Conduct towards *Saul*, under all the undeserved Persecutions, the base and perfidious, the cruel and injurious Treatment he received from that Prince. He had done nothing to give *Saul* just Offence; but had all along served him and his Country with the utmost Zeal and Fidelity. All his Fault was, that the glorious and heroick Actions he performed, procured him the Applause and Admiration of the People. This raised *Saul's* En-

vy and Jealousy: And without any other Provocation, he resolved upon his Ruin, and took all the Ways he could think of to effect it. And at last proceeded so far that he attempted to kill him with his own Hand, even whilst he was attending upon him in his Court, in Obedience to his Commands. And after seeming to be reconciled to him, when *David* had done him new and noble Services, he sent Messengers to his House to seize and slay him. See the 18th and 19th Chapters of the first Book of *Samuel*. Thus was this great and good Man, that had done such eminent Services to his King and Country, forced to fly for his Life, banished not only from the Court, but which affected him more, and of which he often makes the most patheticall Complaints, the Proofs of the excellent Disposition of his Mind, from the Sanctuary of God, and the publick Solemnities of his Worship. And when he had got a Band of Men about him for his Defence, he never made the least Attempt against *Saul*, nor did any Act of Violence to his Countrymen. *Jonathan*, *Saul's* eldest Son, tho' Heir to the Crown, and likely to be most prejudiced by *David's* Succession, was so sensible of his Innocence, that he pleaded for him with his Father, *Let not the King sin against his Servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his Work hath been to thee-ward very good.* And all along he continued to have a most exemplary Friendship. He loved him as his own Soul, from an Esteem and Admiration of his Virtues, and the Harmony between great and noble Minds. Twice *David* had it in his Power to have slain *Saul*, when he came with an Army to destroy him. But when earnestly solicited to it by those about him, rejected the Motion with Abhorrence. *Saul* himself was so affected with *David's* Generosity and Fidelity, that he acknowledged with Tears that he had sinned, and that

David

David had rewarded him Good, whereas he had rewarded him Evil. See the 24th and 26th Chapters of the first Book of *Samuel*. There cannot be a more illustrious Proof than this is, of the noble and generous Disposition of *David's* Mind, and the eminent Degree of heroick Virtue to which he had arrived. He knew that he himself had been anointed King of *Israel*, according to the special Designation and Appointment of God, by the Hand of his Prophet *Samuel*. A Man less eminent for Virtue and true Greatness of Mind than *David* was, would have been apt to think as those about him did, that this was an Opportunity which Providence had put into his Hands, for getting rid of a Man whom God had rejected, and who most unjustly persecuted him, and sought his Life, and for investing him in the Kingdom, to which he had been by divine Appointment designed. But he was resolved to use no sinister Means for obtaining the Crown. He would wait till Providence should bring it about in its own Way; but was determined to do nothing himself that was criminal to accomplish it. Upon the Whole, *David's* Conduct all along towards *Saul*, was incomparably noble, loyal, and virtuous; and yet our pretended *Moral Philosopher*, who would be thought an Admirer of Virtue, makes the worst Representation of it imaginable; whilst at the same Time he does not find the least Fault with *Saul*, whose Treatment of *David* was the most treacherous, unjust, and cruel in the World *.

When he came to the Throne he had a long and glorious Reign, and delivered his Country from all its Enemies and Oppressors. Yet it doth not appear that any of his Wars were undertaken,

* See a Vindication of *David*, against some other Charges brought against him, *Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation*, Vol. II. p. 542, 543.

merely for the Sake of Dominion and Conquest. With Regard to most of them it is evident from the Account given us concerning them, that he was not the *Aggressor*, and there is Reason to think so of all the rest. And although he had a great Aversion to *Idolatry*, yet, that *he rooted out Idolatry, and destroyed Idolaters by Fire and Sword, in all the Nations round about him*, as this Writer affirms, there is not the least Hint given us in the whole History of his Reign; nor, as far as appears, was any one of his Wars undertaken on that Account. Yea it is plain, he did maintain Peace with some of his idolatrous Neighbours, and was willing to have done so with others of them, if it had not been their own Faults *. Nor is there any Thing to support the malicious Charge this Writer brings against him, that *he was the bloodiest Persecutor that ever was known*.

He all along shewed a true Zeal for God, and for his pure Worship, and a hearty Concern for the Interest of Religion. He made very wise Regulations, with Regard to the various Offices and Employments of Priests and Levites, for rendring them more useful, and that they might perform the Work assigned them with greater Order. But that he *doubled their Revenues as they had been settled by Moses* (as this Writer supposes) there is not one Word in the whole Account that is given us of his Reign. And indeed it would have been a hard Thing for him to have doubled their Revenues, if they had *full twenty Shillings in the Pound, on all the Lands of Israel* before. But it may not be amiss to observe on this Occasion, that this Reign, in which, according to our Author, both the Prophets and Priests met with great Encouragement, was one of the most glorious that ever was in *Israel*. Never were the People in a

* See concerning this above, p. 138 and p. 144.

more flourishing Condition. Nor do we find that ever they were oppressed in the Reign of *David*, as afterwards they were under that of *Solomon*. The Justice and Equity with which *David* governed is signified when we are told that *he executed Judgment and Justice unto all his People*, 2 Sam. viii. 15. or as it is expressed, *Psal. lxxviii. 72. He fed them according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided them by the Skilfulness of his Hands*. This Writer represents it as a great Hardship and Servitude, that *he obliged all the People to bring their Sacrifices to Jerusalem, and to offer no where else*. But we read of no such Constitution made by *David*, the Temple at *Jerusalem* not being as yet built. The Constitution obliging them to Sacrifice at the Place which the Lord should choose was as old as *Moses*, and what good Men among the *Israelites* had always practised. Nor was this as he insinuates the Yoke of Servitude which the *Israelites* wanted to shake off, and which was the Cause of their revolting from the House of *David*; but the heavy Yoke of Taxes and Impositions which *Solomon* laid on them, and of which we find no Complaint at all in the Reign of *David*, under whom the People were very happy and flourishing.

The Adultery and Murder *David* was guilty of in the Matter of *Uriah* was the greatest Stain of his Life and Reign, and was indeed a most hainous Crime and Wickedness. And therefore there is a particular Brand set upon it even where he is otherwise commended, 1 Kings xv. 5. it is said that *David did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from any Thing that he commanded him all the Days of his Life, save only in the Matter of Uriah the Hittite*. The Design of which Passage is not to signify that it was the only Fault he was ever guilty of, but that in no other Instance did he presumptuously and wickedly depart from God, to use his own Expressions, *Psal. xviii. 21.*

This

This was a Crime of so hainous a Nature, that it was in Effect a revolting from God and from his Law. And if he had not been recovered from it by a sincere and most exemplary Repentance, he must have been regarded as one utterly abandoned and forsaken of God and all Goodness. But so far is it from being true, that there was *no Kind of Vice and moral Wickedness*, but *what* the Prophets had *approved and justified in David*, that it was the Prophet *Nathan* that first came and charged him with this Crime, with a noble Boldness and Freedom, and denounced the Judgments of God against him on the Account of it, and foretold the Evils that should happen in his own Family as a just Punishment upon him for this his great Wickedness. But then the exemplary *Repentance* David expressed must always be remembered to his Honour. His great Sorrow and Contrition of Heart, and bitter Remorse for his Sins, and his deep Humiliation before God (of which he hath left a lasting Monument to all Ages in the 51st Psalm) and especially his unparallel'd *Resignation* to the divine Will and exemplary Submission to the afflicting Hand of God under the Calamities inflicted upon him for his Sin (of which we have wonderful Instances, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. xvi. 10, 11.) these Things shew the great Difference between him, and many other Princes that have been guilty of the like Crimes.

It is generally supposed, and very probable Reasons might be brought to support that Supposition, that it was in the *Interval* between *David's* great Sin in the Matter of *Uriah*, and his being awakened to Repentance by the lively Reproofs of *Nathan* the Prophet, whilst his Heart was yet hardened in his Sin, and stupified with sensual Pleasure, that he took *Rabbah*, and treated the *Ammonites* with that great Severity of which we have an Account, 2 Sam. xii. 29—31. It must be owned that they had given him the utmost Provocation. This War on their

Part was base and unjust in the highest Degree. They had begun it with a notorious Infraction of the Law of Nations, and had carried it on by hiring and stirring up all the neighbouring Nations against him, which had brought him into great Dangers and Difficulties. When therefore their chief City was taken by assault, this justified a very severe Vengeance. And it was probably only those that had been the *principal* Agents and Fomenters of the War in the several Cities that he treated with this Severity. For we afterwards read that *Shobi the Son of Nahash of Rabbah of the Children of Ammon*, and who is probably supposed to have been the Brother of *Hanun the Ammonitish King* that had so villainously treated his Ambassadors, and begun the War against him, came to assist him in his great Distress, when fleeing from his Son *Absalom*. From whence it may be reasonably concluded, that he had treated him and probably others of the *Ammonites* with great Kindness, whilst he so severely punished the most guilty among them, and perhaps had made him King in his Brother *Hanun's* Stead.

That *David* sinned against God in *numbring* the People is plain from Scripture, tho' in what the precise Nature of his Sin consisted, we cannot well determine at this Distance. But his ingenuous and humble confessing his Sin before the Lord, and especially the great Love and tender Concern he shewed for his Country, in begging that the Punishment might rather be inflicted upon himself and his Family than upon the People, shewed the excellent Disposition of his Mind as became a good King, and a Father of his People.

Upon the whole with regard to the main Course of his Life, and the prevailing Disposition of his Mind he appears to have been an excellent Person. What his habitual Temper and Character was we may learn from his admirable *Psalms*, where we see his whole Soul laid open, the Workings of his Heart

Heart without Disguise. From thence it appears how much his Mind was possessed with just and worthy Sentiments of the Supreme *Being*, and under the Influence of proper Affections and Dispositions towards him: how often he was employed in the affecting Contemplations of God's glorious *Excellencies* and Perfections, and of his wonderful Works of Creation and Providence: what Delight he took in his *Worship*, in praising, blessing, adoring him, and in meditating on his Law, and on his most pure and excellent Precepts. No where can we observe nobler Ardours of Love to God, a more profound Reverence of the divine Majesty, a more intire Submission to his Authority and Resignation to his Will, and a more steddily Confidence in him under the greatest Difficulties and Adversities, joined with the most humbling Sense of his own Guilt and Unworthiness. We may there see how much he was grieved for his Sins; what just Notions he had of *Morality* and the Necessity of an inward *Purity* of Soul; what a Love of Truth and Goodness, and a Hatred of Falshood and Injustice; and how much it was the Desire and Endeavour of his Soul to make a continual Proficiency in Goodness, Piety, and Virtue. These seem to have been the habitual governing Dispositions of his Mind. And accordingly we find him frequently appealing with the greatest Solemnity to the Heart-searching God concerning the Integrity of his Heart, and the Purity of his Intentions. And it is with regard to these excellent Parts of his Character that he is represented as a *Man after God's own Heart*, as well as his Fitness to serve the Purposes of his Providence. Common Candour will oblige us not to give the worst turn to the Actions of such a Man; but rather to judge the most *favourably* concerning any Action of his that appear to us suspicious, being ready to suppose that they would appear to us in a different View, if we were acquainted with all the Circumstances

stances of the case. And where it is evident that he was guilty of great and real *Faults*, the proper Use to be made of them is to reflect on the *Weakness* of human Nature, and to put us upon a constant *Watchfulness* over our selves, and to make us sensible what need we stand in of being continually upon our Guard against Temptations, that had like to have proved the utter Ruin of so excellent a Man, and which cost him such bitter Sorrow and Repentance.

On this occasion I cannot pass by a remarkable Passage which our Author has in the Beginning of his Book, and which gives us a true Taste of his Spirit. After having observed that *David* was the great Master of *Poetry* and *Politeness* in *Israel*, he tells us, that he "made a Jest of himself by dancing naked before the Lord among the Daughters of *Israel*," "and uncovering that which his Modesty ought to have concealed. This was doubtless a merry Action which he as merrily excused to his Wife by ascribing it to his *Zeal* for the Lord, and in the same Humour resolved never to lie with her more, because she could not approve of his warm *Zeal* for the Lord among the Women," 2 Sam. vi. 20—23. see p. 22.

But our pretended *moral Philosopher*, who affects here to shew his Wit, only shews his own Absurdity, and the Immodesty and Levity of his Mind, as well as his virulent Malice against a Person of great Merit. *David* whom he calls the *great Master of Politeness* in *Israel* had too much Sense to be guilty of acting such a part as this on a most solemn religious Occasion, and before all the Heads of the *Tribes* of *Israel* that were then convened, a part which according to his Representation of it, would scarce be born in a drunken Frolick, and in the leudest Company.

Our Author himself was so sensible of the Injustice of this Reflection, that tho' he puts it into the

the Mouth of *Philaletbes* his moral *Philosopher*, whom he would pass upon us for a Lover of Truth and Virtue, yet he makes his other Dialogist *Theophanes*, whom he introduces to act the Part of the *Christian Jew*, tell him that *this Censure is extremely severe if not unjust*, and that the Place referred to might as well bear a more candid Interpretation. And yet so loth is he to part with it, that he makes him at the same time say, that it *may possibly bear that Construction*. But it is evident from the Chapter he refers to 2 Sam. vi. that this Passage cannot possibly bear the Construction the moral *Philosopher* puts upon it. Since in the 14th Verse of that Chapter, where we are told that *David danced before the Lord*, it is at the same time expressly declared, that he *was girded with a linen Ephod*. And this is still more clearly and fully explained, 1 Chron. xv. 27. which relates to the same Transaction. We are there informed that *David was clothed with a Robe of fine Linen, and all the Levites that bare the Ark, and the Singers, &c. David had also upon him an Ephod of Linen*. Where it is evident that *David* had on him a linen Robe, and over that an Ephod which was a shorter Garment girded over the other to keep it from flowing loose. After this Manner the Levites were clothed on solemn Occasions, as appears from this Passage, and from 2 Chron. v. 12, 13. *David* on this Occasion put off his kingly Robes, and was clothed like one of the *Levites*. This with his dancing before the Ark, tho' done purely from a religious Motive and Principle, was what disobligened *Micah*. She thought that *David* greatly demeaned himself, and acted much below the Majesty of a King in what he did; and in her Free and Pride uses the most aggravating Expressions she could think of, the more to expose the Action, and represent it as unseemly and unworthy of him. *David* in answer to her was far from excusing himself in a merry way as this Writer has it; but very seriously

riously and with a just Indignation at the unworthy Representation she had made of his Conduct, he put her in mind that God had chosen him before her Father and all his House, to appoint him to be Ruler over his People: that therefore he would *play before the Lord*, that is, would rejoice and testify his Thankfulness to God; and that if this were to be *vile* or to demean himself, he would do it *yet more*. For what she reproached him for he accounted his Honour. And then the Text lets us know that *Michal had no Child to the Day of her Death*: Her irreligious Pride met with a just Rebuke from God. She was from that Day forward struck with Barrenness, which in those Days especially was accounted a very severe Judgment.

This is more than sufficient to shew the Falshood and Injustice of our Author's Representation of this Matter. But it may not be amiss to consider what a Writer of Quality has offered, from whose superior Sense and Politeness, much better Things might be expected than from our pretended *moral Philosopher*. He has thought fit to make a Representation of this Transaction, which tho' not so base and smutty as this Writer's Account of it, yet sets it in a very unfair and dishonourable Light.

After having represented *David* as a *bearty Espouser of the merry Devotion*, he tells us, that "the famous Entry or high Dance performed by him, after so conspicuous a Manner, in the Procession of the sacred Coffer, shews that he was not ashamed of expressing any Extasy of Joy, or playfom Humour, which was practised by the meanest of the Priests or People on such an Occasion," see *Characterist. Vol. 3^d, p. 117*. 'Tis plain what Ideas he intends to raise of this whole Affair in the Minds of the Reader. *Merry Devotion, high Dance, playfom Humour, practised by the meanest of the People*. And in his Notes at the Bottom of the Page he tells us, that "though this

“ Dance was not performed quite naked (in which
 “ he is juster than our Author) the Dancers, it
 “ seems, were so slightly clothed, that in respect
 “ of Modesty, they might as well have wore no-
 “ thing: their Nakedness appearing still by means
 “ of their high Caperings, Leaps, and violent At-
 “ titudes, which were proper to that Dance.” This
noble Writer gives us as particular a Description of
 it as if he himself had been present, and had seen
 it performed, and was acquainted with the parti-
 cular Measures proper to that Dance. And I think
 he would have done well to have informed us in
 what authentick Memoirs we may find an Account
 of it, or of the clothing they wore on such Occa-
 sions; which he tells us was so slight, that in respect
 of Modesty they might as well have wore nothing.
 But certain it is that *David* was not so slightly clothed.
 He had on, as I have already shewn, a linen Robe,
 which in those Countries was long, reaching to the
 Feet; and over it had an Ephod of Linen girded
 about him, which were very decent Garments, worn
 by the *Levites* in their Ministrations on the most so-
 lemn Occasions, especially when singing the Praises
 of God, see 2 *Chron.* v. 12, 13.

But let us a little particularly consider the Ac-
 count that is given us of this famous Entry, as he
 calls it, which we have described to us in the xv^a
 and xvi^a Chapters of the first Book of *Chronicles*,
 that we may see whether it deserves to have such ri-
 diculous Ideas affixed to it. It appears that it was
 a very august Assembly that was then convened.
 All the chief Men of the Nation were called and
 gathered together; the *Elders of Israel*, and the *Cap-
 tains over thousands*. The Design was to bring up
 the *Ark of God* to the Place which *David* had pre-
 pared for it in *Jerusalem*. And tho’ they had too
 just and worthy Notions of the *Deity* to suppose that
 his Presence was confined there, yet they regarded
 it with the utmost Reverence as a sacred Symbol of his

his more immediate Presence. It is manifest from the Account given us 1 Chron. xv. from the 15th to the 25th Verse, that every thing was done in great Order. Some of the *Levites* bare the Ark as *Moses* had commanded; others of them were appointed to be Singers, being divided into several Classes under their proper Masters, and had their several Parts assigned them, some upon one musical Instrument, some upon another, to sing sacred Songs or Hymns to the Praise of God. And that noble Form of Thanksgiving and Praise which we have, 1 Chron. xvi. from the 7th Verse to the 37th Verse was given by *David* on this Occasion. The *Levites* sung it, and all the People said Amen, and praised the Lord. In that admirable Hymn *David* excites the People to give Thanks unto the Lord, to glory and rejoice in his holy Name, and to remember and speak of his wonderful Works. He first puts the People of *Israel* in mind of the particular Obligations they were under to bless the Lord on the Account of the great Things he had done for them. And then with a noble Ardor and Enlargement of Soul calls upon all the Nations in the World to form as it were one universal delightful Consort in singing Praises to God, and giving him the Glory that is due to his great and most excellent Name, whose unequalled Majesty and Perfections he extols as infinitely superior to all the *Idol-Deities*. And lastly, he calls upon the whole Creation, the Heavens, the Earth, the Sea, the Woods, the Fields, to break forth into a Transport of divine Joy and Praise. And the whole concludes with again calling upon the People of *Israel* to give Thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his Mercy [endureth for ever; and to pray to him to save and to deliver them; and to bless his holy Name for ever, to which the whole Assembly said Amen.

This was the Assembly, and this the Occasion which is represented in so ridiculous a Light as if it

were only a ludicrous gamesome Mob. Immediately before the *Ark* which was carried in solemn Procession, King *David* walked with the *Levites* all around him ranked in their several Orders, singing Praises to God to solemn Airs of divine Musick : whilst he himself danced *with all his Might*, i. e. with his best *Ability*, or with all his *Heart*, (as that Phrase is sometimes used) to shew the Joy and Exultation of his Soul. And tho' I will not pretend, like this honourable Writer, to tell particularly what Kind of Dance it was ; yet this I dare be sure of, both from the Solemnity of the Occasion, and from *David's* own Character, that there was nothing in it light or immodest. He certainly was a Man of excellent Sense, as appears from his admirable Writings, which shew the exalted Notions he had of what was just and pure, and lovely and praise-worthy ; he was a great and wise King, and too good a *Politician* to expose himself by any light immodest Behaviour on this Occasion in the Beginning of his Reign, when the whole *Nation* were assembled and Witnesses of his Conduct ; and especially before the *Ark* of God, whose Presence inspired a profound Reverence as well as Joy, and more so at this time, considering what had so lately happened in the Case of *Uzzab*. His Soul was then filled with Joy, but it was with a divine Joy and Exultation in the Goodness of God ; and the admirable *Hymn* he composed on that Occasion shews what noble and divine Sentiments then possessed his Mind, how far from any thing so mean, low, indecent, and trivial as they would put upon him.

Indeed, any one that considers the peculiar Modesty and *Decency* prescribed in the Law of *Moses* to be observed in the divine Worship ; and what care was taken to shun whatsoever had the least Appearance of any thing indecent or impure* ; will see

* See *Exod.* xx. 26. xxviii. 42, 43. to which may be added *Deut.* xxiii. 12—14.

how incredibly absurd it is to suppose, that *David* who was so well acquainted with the Law, would before the Ark of God dance naked, or so slightly clothed, that in respect of Modesty he might as well have wore nothing; or that the sacred Dances used on such Occasions, should be of such a Nature as if they were contrived on Purpose to uncover their Nakedness. We find that in the latter Times of the Jewish State a Roman Soldier's exposing himself naked before the People at one of their sacred Festivals, raised such a violent Commotion among the Jews, that occasioned the Death of thousands, and could hardly be appeased. Such an Abhorrence had the whole Nation of any thing that had the Appearance of Indecency and Impurity in their Worship, even at a time when they were sufficiently loose in their Morals, see *Josephus's Antiq.* Lib. 20.

This noble Writer is pleased to represent *David* as a hearty Encourager of the merry Devotion. And he had observed a little before, that under that Constitution not only Musick, but even Play and Dance were of holy Appointment, and divine Right *. All the Ridicule here arises from the Idea now affixed to the Words *Play* and *Dance* in our Language. But it is unworthy of a Man of Learning to take Advantage from modern Customs and Expressions to expose a Custom among the Antients, that carried nothing of that Idea of Unseemliness and Levity in divine Worship which it doth at present. It appears that on the most solemn Occasions some kind of Dance as well as Musick was then made use of in their sacred Exercises: *Let them praise his Name in the Dance; let them sing Praises unto*

* If this Representation which this noble Writer here gives of the Jewish Religion be just, I do not see with what Consistency he could say as he does p. 116. That they had certainly in Religion as in every thing else, the least good Humour of any People in the World, is very apparent.

him with the Timbrel and Harp, Pſal. cxlix. 3. and again, Pſal. cl. 4. Praise him with the Timbrel and Dance, praise him with ſtringed Inſtruments and Organs. What the Measure of their Dance, or what their Muſick was on ſuch Occaſions we cannot now pretend to explain. But if we may judge of the one or the other by the Maſteſty, the Dignity, the great and ſublime Sentiments contained in their divine Songs, it had nothing in it light, effeminate, and vain, or that bordered on Wantonneſs and Impurity. All was noble, grand, manly and divine.

What the laſt mentioned Author farther adds, hath ſuch a Tendency to expoſe the Spirit of Prophecy, which is what we have been conſidering and vindicating, that I hope it will not be thought an uſeleſs Digreſſion to conſider it. He leaves the curious Reader “ to examine what Relation this religious
 “ Extaſy and naked Dance (*viz.* of *David* at the
 “ bringing in of the Ark) had to the *naked* and
 “ *proceſſional Prophecy*, 1 Sam. xix. 23, 24. where
 “ Prince, Prieſt, and People prophesied in Con-
 “ junction; the Prince himſelf being both of the
 “ *itinerant* and *naked* Party. It appears that even
 “ before he was yet advanced to the Throne, he
 “ had been ſeized with this prophesying Spirit, *er-*
 “ *rant, proceſſional, and ſaltant*, attended as we
 “ find with a ſort of martial Dance, performed in
 “ Troops or Companies with Pipe and Tabret ac-
 “ companying the March, together with Pſaltry,
 “ Harp, Cornets, Timbrels and other Variety of
 “ Muſick,” ſee 1 Sam. x. 5. xix. 23, 24. 2 Sam.
 vi. 5.

It happens that in none of the Paſſages here referred to, there is the leaſt mention of their *dancing*: tho’ they are produced to prove the *ſaltant Spirit of Prophecy*. But his own fruitful Imagination or Prejudices have enabled this ingenious Author not only to diſcover that they danced, but to tell us what Kind of Dance it was. He has found

that

that it was a sort of martial Dance, performed in Troops, &c. I see nothing to prove this except their having Instruments of Musick with them must pass for a Proof. And yet these were no other than were afterwards used in the Temple in the solemn Acts of divine Worship and Praise. It is very probable, that if *Trumpets* had been mentioned on this Occasion, this would have been looked upon as a Demonstration, and yet every Body knows that a Trumpet was often used among the *Jews* where nothing of a martial Nature was intended. See *Psal.* lxxx. 3. cl. 3. All that appears from that Passage, 1 *Sam.* x. 5. is that there was a Company of Prophets coming down from the High Place, where probably they had been offering Sacrifice; and that they were singing Praises to God at the Sound of musical Instruments; and that *Saul* suddenly transported as with a divine Rapture joined with them in the sacred Exercise, and broke forth into Hymns of Praise. For this seems to be the Meaning of his Prophefying with them: which is not there to be understood properly of foretelling Things to come, but as it sometimes is in Scripture of singing sacred Hymns and Songs with Exultation and Devotion. So we read 1 *Cbron.* xxv. 1—6. of Persons who according to the Order of the King were appointed to *prophecy with Harps, with Psalteries and Cymbals to give thanks and to praise the Lord.* Where to *prophecy*, and to *give thanks*, and to *praise the Lord*, are represented as the same Thing. The Prophefying mentioned 1 *Sam.* xix. 20, 23, 24. which is the other Passage referred to, is probably to be understood the same Way. *Saul* had sent Messengers to seize *David* upon hearing that he was at *Naiotb* in *Ramah* with the Prophet *Samuel*: When they came there they saw the Company of the Prophets prophefying, and *Samuel* standing as appointed over them. They were probably all employed in celebrating the Praises of God in noble

noble elevated Hymns and Acts of Devotion. And the Messengers *Saul* sent by a special Influence of divine Providence catch'd the sacred Transport. They were hereupon ravished as with a divine Extasy, and joined with the Prophets in solemn Acts of Adoration and Praise. And so did the second and third Party of Messengers he sent after them. Then went *Saul* himself, probably full of Rage, and with a Resolution perhaps to destroy not only *David* but *Samuel* too, and the whole Company of the Prophets that were with him. For his destroying the Town of *Nob* with the High-Priest and all the Priests that lived there, upon a very slight Suspicion of their favouring *David*; and the Attempt he made against the Life of his own Son, shewed what in the Rage of his Fury and Jealousy he was capable of. But it pleased God so to order it, that he himself before he came to *Naioth* was seized by the Way as with a prophetical Transport. And he went on *prophefying* in the Sense already explained, till he came to the Place where *Samuel* was. Thus he was disarmed of his bloody Intention, and his Rage and Fury turned into Praise and sacred Extasy by a wonderful Influence of God's Spirit upon him. And we are told that when he came to *Naioth*, *he stripped off his Clothes also*, that is, he laid by his Royal Robes or military Ha-

* The *stripping off the Clothes*, or *laying aside the Garments* is often to be understood, not of throwing off all their Vestments but only the *upper Garment*. Thus we are told, that our Saviour when he washed his Disciples Feet, *laid aside his Garments*, or put off his Clothes, not that he was absolutely naked, for it is added, that he *girded himself*, Joh. xiii. 4. And the Word *naked* is sometimes used both in Scripture and other Authors, where absolute Nakedness is not intended, but only a Person's being slightly clothed, or being without his upper Garment, or his proper usual Habit. So *Michal* represents *David* as having *uncovered himself* because he had laid aside his Royal Robes, tho' he was far from being absolutely naked, as hath been shewn.

biliments,

biliments, and *prophefied before Samuel*. He became himself, like one of the Prophets he came to destroy, wholly taken up in praising and adoring God. And after he had done thus prophefying, *he lay down naked all that Day, and all that Night*; not that he was without any thing at all to cover him, but he lay down divested of his *Robes* or upper Garments, and thus continued in a Trance, or in a Kind of Extasy, all the Remainder of that Day and the Night following. A manifest and remarkable Proof, how much the greatest Princes and all their Purposes are in the Hand of God. He that was so jealous of his Royalty, which put him upon doing so many unjust and unwarrantable Things, was now made as it were to *Unking* himself, and lay aside the Ensigns of his Dignity and Power; and was constrained by a higher Hand to lie down without Power, without Royalty, unable to execute the Purpose for which he came. In the mean time *David* had an Opportunity given him to get far enough out of his Reach. And if *Saul*, as is very probable, came with any bloody Intentions against *Samuel* and the other Prophets that were with him, and perhaps against his own Messengers, this wonderful Incident made such an Impression upon him as caused him for that time to lay aside his cruel Resolutions. Considered in this View this whole Affair, tho' *wonderful*, and of an extraordinary Nature, had nothing in it that can be proved to be *unworthy* of the Wisdom of God. The Ridicule here lies not in the Thing itself considered in all its Circumstances, but in the Expressions this noble Author in his great Command of Words is pleased to throw in upon this Occasion, concerning the *prophefying Spirit, itinerant, errant, processional, and saltant*, and in the Insinuations he gives that the Prince, Prophets, and People all danced naked without any Thing to cover them. And it is as true that they all danced and prophefied naked on this

this Occasion as that David did so in his famous Entry.

CHAP. X.

The Author's farther Inveective against the Prophets considered. His Account of their pretended Conspiracy against Solomon. The rending the Kingdom of the ten Tribes from the House of David, not owing to the Intrigues of the Prophets, but to the just Judgment of God. The Prophets, not the Authors of the several civil Wars and Revolutions in the Kingdom of Israel. The favourable Account he gives of Ahab and Jezabel, and the other idolatrous Princes as Friends to Toleration and Liberty of Conscience. The Falshood of this shewn. His Attempt to vindicate the Persecutions raised against the true Prophets of the Lord. Concerning Elijah's Character and Conduct, and particularly concerning his causing Baal's Prophets to be put to Death at Mount Carmel. The Case of Elisha's anointing Jehu to be King of Israel, with a Commission to destroy the Royal House of Ahab, considered: as also his Management with Hazael. The Charge this Writer brings against the Prophets somenting the Wars between the two Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and at length occasioning the Ruin of both, shewn to be false and inconsistent.

OUR moral Philosopher, after having represented the Prophets as quiet and satisfied in the Reign of David, proceeds to inform us of a Conspiracy they formed against Solomon and his Family on the Account of his granting a general Indulgence and Toleration to all Religions. It is under this Idea that he thinks fit to represent his Defection to Idolatry in the latter Part of his Reign. He built High-Places himself to Moloch and Chemosh,

and other *Idol-Deities*, not so much out of Policy as this Writer would make us believe, as in Compliance with his *Wives*, swayed by Effeminacy and a Love of Pleasure, which debases and corrupts the best Understandings. This he did in express Violation not only of the fundamental Laws of his Country, as hath been already shewn, but of the particular *Covenant* or Promise whereby *David* and his Posterity held the Crown; which was upon Condition of their continuing to walk in God's Commandments and Judgments, and adhering to his pure Worship as *David* himself had done. Our Author indeed affirms once and again that *David* took it to be an *absolute* Promise to him and his Posterity of an uninterrupted Succession to the Throne without any Condition at all, see p. 261, 286. But that *David* himself understood it otherwise is evident from his own express Account of it, 1 *Kings* ii. 3, 4. and 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 6, 7, 9. And that *Solomon* had the same Notion of it appears from what he saith in his Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple: *Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with thy Servant David my Father that which thou hast promised him, saying, there shall not fail thee a Man in my Sight to sit upon the Throne of Israel: yet so that thy Children take heed to their way, to walk in my Law as thou hast walked before me,* 2 *Chron.* vi. 16. Add to this, that God himself appeared unto *Solomon*, and promised him to *establish* the Throne of his Kingdom, if he *observed his Statutes and Judgments*, as *David* his Father had done: and on the other Hand, threatned to *destroy* both Kings and People if they *forsook his Statutes and Judgments*, and *served other Gods*, and *worshipped them*; and that he would *root them out of that Land*, and *destroy that House which was called by his Name*, and *make them a By-word*, and an *Astonishment to all Nations*, see 1 *Kings* ix. 4—10. It is therefore justly observed as an Aggravation of *Solomon's*

Solomon's Guilt, that his Heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this Thing, that he should not go after other Gods: but that he kept not that which the Lord commanded, 1 Kings xi. 9, 10. This being the true State of the Case, if God had absolutely deprived Solomon himself and all his Posterity of the Kingdom, he could not justly have complained of any Thing but his own Conduct, who had broken the Conditions on which he knew it was originally granted to David and his Family. But it pleased God to deal more tenderly with him. We are told that the Lord declared unto him, probably by some Prophet who was sent to deliver that Message, that because he had not kept his Covenant and his Statutes, the Kingdom should be rent from his Son, and given to his Servant, yet not intirely, but so that a Part of it should still be reserved to his Family, and that he himself should enjoy the whole of it during his own Life-time *. See 1 Kings xi. 11—14. And accordingly the Prophet Abijah was sent in the Name of God to promise to Jeroboam Solomon's Servant, the Kingdom of the ten Tribes; at the same time letting him know that it was the Will of God, that Solomon should possess the Kingdom during his own Life-time, and that his Son also should have the Kingdom of Judah continued to him. And this Promise to Jeroboam was also conditional; that if he would bearken unto all that God command-

* Our Author ascribes Solomon's being preserved in the Possession of the Kingdom during his Life-time to his being strengthened by foreign Alliances, among which he particularly mentions his Alliance with Egypt; when it appears on the contrary that Egypt instead of giving Solomon Assistance, rather gave Encouragement to his Enemies, and was a Harbour for disaffected Persons, probably thro' Envy or Jealousy of Solomon's Greatness. Thither fled Jeroboam when Solomon sought to slay him, and thither fled Hadad the Edomite, and both met with great Countenance and Assistance there.

and would walk in his Ways to keep his Statutes and Commandments as David had done, God would build him a sure House, as he did for David, and would give Israel unto him; see 1 Kings xi. 29—38. This Message which the Prophet *Abijah* delivered by the divine Command to *Jeroboam*, when they two were alone in the Field, is what our Author hath improved into a Conspiracy of the Prophets, whom he represents as very profound Politicians, that had laid their Projects deep for bringing about a new Revolution in the State, tho' how they were to effect it, or how the Prophets came to have such an interest among the Tribes, as to be able to give ten Tribes to one, and reserve two to another, he doth not inform us. However he assures us, that *Abijah* let *Jeroboam* into those Secrets and deep Designs of State; and laid before him what was intended and projected by the Prophets against *Solomon* and his Family; and that if he would be governed by them, and destroy all Idolaters, they would order Matters, so that he should have the Crown. According to this Account *Jeroboam* must have known that the whole was merely a Contrivance of those Politicians the Prophets, and that there was nothing of extraordinary Prediction or divine Inspiration in the Case. But it is certain, *Jeroboam* himself was of another Mind. He knew nothing of those prophetic Secrets and deep Designs of State which our Author is the first that has discovered to the World. For when his Son *Abijah* was sick, he desired his Wife to disguise herself, and go to *Shiloh* to inquire about him, giving this Reason for it; *Behold there is Abijah the Prophet which told me that I should be King over this People, go to him, and he shall tell thee, what shall become of the Child*, 1 Kings xiv. 2, 3. Where it is evident that he looked upon *Abijah* as a true Prophet of God, extraordinarily inspired to foretel future Events; and he mentions his having foretold that he should be King over *Israel*

rael as a Proof of it. And indeed his foretelling so clearly and expressly this extraordinary Revolution in the Days of *Solomon*, when there was so little Likelihood of effecting it, and his foretelling with so much Particularity that *Jeroboam* should reign over ten of the Tribes and no more; and the exact Accomplishment of it, contrary to all Appearance, and which would have been prevented if *Reboam* had but behaved with common Prudence, and had hearkened to the Advice which the wise Counsellors gave him; this shewed that the Prophet *Abijah* was indeed sent of God, and that that whole Affair, which it was impossible for any human Sagacity to foresee, was ordered and over-ruled by his all-disposing Providence, for accomplishing his own just and righteous Judgments.

This ought to have engaged *Jeroboam*, who was convinced that *Abijah* was sent of God, to have conformed himself strictly to the Commands that were given him by that Prophet, in the Name of God, when he foretold his coming to the Throne of *Israel*. But tho' *Jeroboam* knew that the Kingdom was rent from *Solomon*, as a Punishment for his Idolatry, and that when it pleased God to promise the Kingdom of *Israel* to himself, and to his Posterity, it was on Condition of walking in his Ways, and keeping his Statutes and Commandments, yet in express Contradiction to the divine Law, he set up the Calves at *Dan* and *Betel*; not as this Author represents it, from the friendly Regard he had to Toleration and Liberty of Conscience, but merely from a Motive of worldly carnal Policy; for Fear that if the People had continued to go up to worship at *Jerusalem*, they should revolt to the Family of *David* again. *1 Kings* xii. 26—28. But this irreligious Policy of his, through the just Judgment of God, only served to hasten the Ruin of his House, which was designed to establish. The same Prophet *Abijah*

Abijah, that had foretold his Advancement to the Throne of *Israel*, did also by divine Appointment declare that *Jeroboam's* whole Race and Family should be cut off, and destroyed: And at the same Time he expressly foretold, that God would root up *Israel* out of the good Land which he gave to their Fathers, and scatter them beyond the River, 1 Kings xiv. 4. A clear Evidence that he spake by divine Inspiration, since he so clearly foretold an Event which did not happen till some Ages after. *Jeroboam's* Son *Nadab*, and all his Family, was destroyed (as *Abijah* had foretold, tho' it can hardly be supposed that that Prophet, who was then blind and decrepid with Age, could be capable of forming Projects to effect it) by *Baasha*; and afterwards *Baasha's* Son *Elah*, and all his House, were destroyed by *Zimri*; which Event was also exactly foretold by the Prophet *Jehu*, whilst *Baasha* was in all his Prosperity. And then *Zimri*, within seven Days after his usurping the Throne, was destroyed by *Omri*, who after a Civil War for some Years, between him and *Tibni*, was established on the Throne. Our Author would fain lay all these Commotions and Revolutions to the Charge of the Prophets. He calls them *Revolutions in favour of Religion*, and saith that *all this Slaughter and Bloodshed was for Religion*. See p. 310, 311. Though there is not the least Proof that Religion was so much as pretended by *Baasha*, or *Zimri*, as the Cause of their Conspiracies. Nor indeed can it be supposed that they would pretend the setting up and worshipping the Calves at *Dan* and *Beithel* to be the Cause of their Conspiracies, which they found no Fault with, and practised themselves, both before and after their coming to the Crown. There is not the least Mention of the Prophets in all these Revolutions, any farther than that they had foretold them a considerable Time before they happened. And if this must be allowed to be a

Proof of their having effected them, then the *Prophets* may, with equal Reason, be charged with being the Authors of all the wonderful Revolutions in the successive Monarchies and Empires of the World, which they distinctly foretold; which would be to attribute to them a Kind of Divinity, and sovereign Dominion over the World and Mankind. And at that Rate also our *Saviour* must be charged with being the Cause of *Judas's* Treason, because he clearly foretold it.

Our Author observes, that when an Account is given of *Zimri's* violent Death, within seven Days after his mounting the Throne, it is represented as a Punishment upon him, not for the Murder and Treason he was guilty of, in murdering *Elah* and all his House, but only for *his doing Evil in the Sight of the Lord, in walking in the Way of Jeroboam, and in his Sin, whereby he made Israel to sin.* 1 Kings xvi. 19. But had not the sacred Historian mentioned his *Murder and Treason* just before, v. 16 — 18. as the Reason why all the People rose up against him, and besieged him in *Tirzah*, whereby he was compelled to burn himself in his Palace? Is not this sufficiently declaring, that his Murder and Treason brought his Destruction upon him? And tho' his Treason is not again particularly mentioned in the 19th Verse, among his evil Doings that brought upon him the divine Judgments, but *his walking in the Ways of Jeroboam*; this is not designed to signify, that his imitating *Jeroboam's* Idolatry was his only Crime; for his *Treason* that *he wrought* is again taken Notice of, in the Verse immediately following. But according to the strict Order observed by the sacred Historian, it is observed of him, as well as of the other Kings of *Israel*, that he was engaged in the same Course of political Idolatry with his Predecessors. And this was particularly proper to shew that it was not for any Aversion he had to the Sins and Idolatry that

Baalsham

Baasha's House was guilty of, that he rose up against them, but merely to gratify his own Ambition and Cruelty and Lust of reigning. Thus it is observed, *v. 13* of that Chapter where an Account is given of the Destruction of *Baasha's* Family, that it was because of *their Sins, by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their Vanities, or Idols.* Where their Idolatry alone is mentioned as the Cause of the Ruin that befel them in God's righteous Judgment. And yet that it was not the Design of the sacred Writer to insinuate, that this was the only Wickedness that exposed them to the divine Vengeance is evident; since in the 7th Verse of the same Chapter *Baasha's* destroying the House of *Jeroboam*, which however just as from God, was unjust in him, and wholly owing to his own Cruelty and Ambition; is charged upon him as a Crime, for which Judgment was denounced against him and his Family.

This Writer proceeds next to the Reign of *Ahab*, of whom and his Queen *Jezabel* he speaks with great Complacency, for no other Reason that I can see, but because they are stigmatized in the sacred Writings for their Wickedness and Idolatry, and because they *killed* the Lord's Prophets. For it seems to be a constant Rule with him, to do all he possibly can to vilify and blacken the best and brightest Characters there spoken of: And if any one be there represented as wicked and idolatrous, this is sufficient to recommend him to the Esteem of our pretended *Moral Philosopher*; who seems as solicitous to blanch over the Crimes and Vices of the one, as to sully and calumniate the Virtues of the other.

Ahab and *Jezabel* not only built a House or Temple to *Baal*, and maintained 450 Prophets of *Baal*, and 400 Prophets of the Groves, in express teach and Defiance of the fundamental Laws and

Constitutions of *Israel*; but they barbarously persecuted the true Worshippers of God, *threw down his Altars*, and *slew his Prophets with the Sword*. See 1 *Kings* xviii. 4, 13. xix. 10. Yet this Writer who all along would be thought such an Enemy to *Persecution*, and seems to make the Whole of Religion to consist in *Liberty of Conscience*, and will scarce allow that God himself hath a Right to punish Idolatry, is not ashamed to stand up in Defence of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*, for murdering the Lord's Prophets; and even whilst he is giving an Account of this, has the Confidence to praise the idolatrous Kings of *Israel*, for maintaining Toleration and Liberty of Conscience. p. 313, 314. All that I can make of this is, that in this Author's Opinion, it was Persecution not to tolerate the publick Worship of *Baal*, or to destroy his Priests and Altars, but it was no Persecution to throw down God's Altars, and to put his Prophets to Death. He seems highly to approve the Scheme that *Ahab* laid to root out the Prophets, and to establish some other Religion more friendly and beneficent to Mankind, by which I suppose he means the *Baalitish* Idolatry, p. 312. And after giving a very favourable Account of that Idolatry, and of the Priests of *Baal*, whom he represents as Friends to Liberty and Toleration, he affirms that "No Instance
" can be given throughout the whole History,
" where any of the Kings charged with Idolatry
" used any Force or Violence, to oblige any Body
" to worship the Calves, *Baal*, *Astheroth*, &c. and
" that they never hindred any of their People that
" had a Mind to go up to *Jerusalem*, to worship
" God in the legal Way, of which *Tobit* was
" one *." And he denies that they are charged

* That many pious Persons of the ten Tribes went up from Time to Time to worship at *Jerusalem*, we may well suppose

with enforcing *Idolatry by Law*, p. 313, 314. But are we not expressly told concerning *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, that he made *High-Places in the Mountains of Judah*, and caused the *Inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit Fornication*, (by which is evidently there meant *Idolatry*) and compelled *Judah thereto*. 2 Chron. xxi. 11. Can any Thing be a more direct Proof of what this Writer with so much Confidence denies? And this *Jehoram* probably did, in Imitation of the Kings of *Israel*, and particularly of the House of *Abah*. For it is observed a little before, that he walked in the Way of the Kings of *Israel*, like as did the House of *Abah*: for he had the Daughter of *Abah* to Wife. Ver. 6. And the Statutes of *Omri*, who was *Abah's* Father, mentioned *Micah* vi. 16. cannot well be understood of any Thing else than some Laws for enforcing *Idolatry* by the publick Authority. But need we go farther for a Proof of the persecuting Rage of some at least of the idolatrous Kings, than the Reign of *Abah*, the very Time this Author fixes upon for extolling their Lenity and Indulgence? The Persecution was so severe, that all publick Worship of the true God was entirely prohibited. And as many of his Prophets as could be found, whose Business it was to instruct the People in the true Religion, were slain with the Sword. So that *Elijah* thought he was left alone; and that there were no true Worshipers of God left in *Israel* but himself: tho' God informs him, that there were some thousands that had not fallen into the common *Idolatry*, but still worshipped the true

but this was not with the Allowance of their Kings who set up the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel* on purpose to prevent it. Thus particularly we find that great Numbers went from *Israel* to worship at *Jerusalem* in the Days of *Asa*, but *Baasha* King of *Israel* was so far from allowing it, that he built *Ramah* to the intent that none might go out or come in to *Asa* King of *Judah*. See 2 Chron. xv. 9. xvi. 1.

God in private, tho' they were not suffered to do it in a publick Way.

But our *Moral Philosopher*, in Order to justify as far as in him lies, the Violence used by *Abah* and *Jezabel*, tells us, that *Experience* had evinced, that it was impossible for the regal Power and prophetick Office to subsist together, and therefore *Abah* hoped to have put an End to this holy Order, and thereby have cut off the Occasion of more religious Wars. And that *Jezabel* seemed to have had some Appearance of natural Justice in the Scheme she laid for the Destruction of the Lord's Prophets; since it is certain, that they had greatly inflamed and excited the People to Rebellion, and cut off one Royal Family after another for above two hundred Years past on account of Religion.—And that she designed to exterminate them as Enemies not only to their own Country, but to the common Peace and Tranquillity of the World, p. 312—314.

But it doth not appear that *Jezabel* had any Inducement to do what she did but her Zeal for *Baal* and his Worship; or that either she or *Abah* ever so much as pretended to charge the Prophets with having been the Authors of Rebellions and Insurrections among the People. This is entirely the Fiction of this candid and righteous Author without any Thing but his own Malice against the Prophets to support the Accusation. And this is the way he hath found out to reconcile the Practice of Persecution with a pretended Zeal against it. It is but charging Persons with Treason and Rebellion against the State, and interpreting their faithful Warnings against the publick Vices and Idolatry, to be a Design to stir up Insurrections among the People, and then it is right to destroy them without being guilty of Persecution at all. Thus he takes the Methods that the worst of Persecutors have always done: first, to blacken the Characters of the good Men they had a Mind to destroy, and

fix odious Brands upon them as Rebels and Incendiaries, and then to use them cruelly, and massacre them; which is a double Murder committed, upon their Persons and Reputations. Thus the Apostles, the Design of whose preaching was to *turn Men from Darknes unto Light*, from Idolatry and Vice to the pure Worship of God, and the Practice of Righteousness, were represented as Persons that *turned the World upside down*; and the Apostle Paul in particular was charged as a *pestilent Fellow*, and a *Mover of Sedition*.

Our Author seems to mention it with regret, that Abab could not *put an End to this Holy Order*, as he hoped to have done, *because the Prophets had still more Interest and Influence with the People than the Kings*, p. 312. And that Jezebel, tho' she had cut off many of the Prophets, found it *impossible to root them out, whilst they had so much Interest, and the People were resolved to protect them*, p. 314. This is said with a view to insinuate what Power they had to raise Insurrections and Commotions among the People. But how absurd is it to talk of the mighty Influence the Prophets had over the People at a time when the whole Nation had generally fallen into *Idolatry* in Opposition to their Instructions and Admonitions, and the few that had kept themselves pure from it, were scarce to be discerned, and durst not publicly shew themselves? If the Prophets *had so much Interest* with the People, and they were *resolved to protect them*, how came Jezebel to have it in her Power to destroy as many of them as she could find? For if any escaped, it was only owing to their being concealed in secret Places, like those whom Obadiab fed with Bread and Water in a Cave, or to their flying out of the Country. It appears from the Account we have of *Elijah* himself, the most eminent Prophet of that time, that he lived for the most part during that Reign in Obscurity and Retirement, in constant

Hazard of his Life, persecuted from Place to Place; nor do we find him coming into Places of publick Resort, but when he was sent upon extraordinary Messages from God, which he delivered and discharged with an undaunted Fortitude. The only Instance that can be produced to shew his Power and Influence over the People, is what this Writer mentions, his procuring *Baal's* Prophets to be slain when they were assembled together to Mount *Carmel*. But this was only the Effect of a sudden strong Impression that was then made upon the People, upon their seeing the signal *Miracle* which was wrought before them all, and which gave them an illustrious Proof upon a solemn Contest, that he was a true Prophet of God, and that the Lord *Yehovah* whose Prophet he was, was the only true God. Under the Influence of this present Conviction, they obeyed the Directions he gave them to destroy those Prophets, who were then engaged in the very Act of *Idolatry*. This tho' an extraordinary Action was very just, both as a *Retaliation* for the Destruction of the Lord's Prophets who had been causelessly put to Death by *Jezabel*, and probably at the Instigation of these false Prophets; and because these Persons were all of them notorious *Criminals*, devoted to Death by the fundamental Laws of their Constitution, which was of divine Original and Appointment*. To which was added at that time the special Command and Authority of God himself, who upon *Elijah's* Prayer and solemn Appeal to him before all the People, gave an illustrious Attestation from Heaven that *Elijah* was his Servant, and that what he then did was according to his Word, that is, by Commission from him, see *1 Kings* xviii. 36, &c. *Abab* himself, who seems

* Besides the general Law for punishing those with Death that seduced the People to *Idolatry*, there was a particular Law which appointed that the Prophet that should speak in the Name of other Gods should be put to Death, *Deut.* xviii. 20.

to have been present at this Contest between *Elijah* and the Prophets of *Baal* was probably struck at that time with what he saw as much as the People, and therefore made no Opposition to the slaying of *Baal's* Prophets. And it plainly appears from the Account there given us, that he believed what *Elijah* then assured him of, that God would immediately put an End to the grievous Drought that had so long afflicted the whole Country, and send a great Quantity of Rain, which accordingly upon *Elijah's* earnest Prayer to God was accomplished that very Day.

One would think that *Elijah's* Interest with the People was now at the Height, and that now if ever they should be *resolved to protect him*. And yet so little was *Jezabel* apprehensive of this pretended Influence of the Prophets to raise Insurrections and Commotions, that as soon as she heard of what *Elijah* had done, she sent a peremptory Message to him that she would have his Life the very next Day: and he had no way of escaping her Rage but by *flying* first into *Judah*, and then into the Wilderness, alone and destitute of all human Succour and Protection.

Afterwards indeed we find Him coming to *Abab* again with a special Message from God, and denouncing the most dreadful Vengeance against him and his Family for the Murder of *Naboth*. An execrable Wickedness, contrived by *Jezabel*, and approved by *Abab*, and which may let us into the true Character of both. For what could be a more flagrant and deliberate Wickedness, than first to suborn false Witnesses against a good and innocent Man, and to get him condemned for *Blasphemy* against God, and *Treason* against the King (which Charge was as true as that which this Writer advances against the Prophets) and then destroy and murder him under that Pretence, and probably his Children with him, as may be gathered from 2 *Kings* ix. 26. and so

seize

seize his Inheritance. It was on this Occasion that *Abab* meeting *Elijah* said to him, *Hast thou found me, O mine Enemy?* see 1 Kings xxi. 17—20. And he had once before called him *the Troubler of Israel*, Chap. xviii. 17. Not that he intended to charge him with raising Insurrections and Commotions against the Government, but he hated him for his faithful Reproofs, and dreaded the Judgments he denounced with an impartial Zeal against him for his Sins. The Answer that *Elijah* returned to him on both those Occasions is remarkable: He lets him know that it was *he* by his own Wickedness that brought those Evils both upon himself and upon the People. Compare 1 Kings xviii. 18. and Chap. xxi. 20, &c. in which latter Passage he plainly and expressly foretels the Ruin that should befall *Abab* and his Family, and the principal Circumstances of it with a wonderful Particularity, all which received an exact Accomplishment. The Effect this had upon *Abab*, in the outward Signs of Repentance and Humiliation it produced, tho' it did not effect a true Repentance and Amendment, but was a transient Remorse that soon went off, shewed the inward Conviction he had that *Elijah* was a true Prophet of the Lord extraordinarily sent and inspired by him, and the Reverence he had for his Piety, and inflexible Righteousness and Integrity. And indeed from the Account that is given us in the History of *Abab*, it seems very probable that at the latter End of his Reign, tho' he did not cast off the Worship of *Baal* which he continued in to the End of his Life, yet he was also willing to keep up some outward *Form* of worshipping the true God, and of shewing a Regard to his Prophets, and did not so openly persecute them as he had done before. And accordingly, it is not improbable that he suffered some of the propheticall *Schools* to be again opened; and was willing to have some about him under the Character of the Lord's Prophets.

phets, who yet should not prove troublesome to him by their Reproofs. And accordingly, as some true Prophets were suffered in the latter End of *Abab's* Reign, as we may gather from the Instances of such Prophets, *1 Kings* xx. 13, 28, 35. So there were Numbers of pretended ones that assumed that Character to pay their Court to the King, and who took care to please and flatter him, and to prophesy as he would have them. Such were the *four hundred* that encouraged him to go up to *Ramoth Gilead*, and promised him Victory and Success. These were the Prophets he caressed, whilst he hated *Micaiah* the true Prophet of the Lord, and counted him his Enemy merely because he reprov'd him for his Faults, and told him the plain Truth, and did not flatter him as the others did. Our Author indeed would have those four hundred pass for true Prophets of God, that he may the better charge them with conspiring *Abab's* Destruction. But this hath been already sufficiently exposed.

The next Instance this Writer mentions is the Affair of *Jebu's* being anointed King of *Israel*, and destroying the whole House of *Abab*. And this is the only Instance that can be produced of a Prophet's expressly anointing a Person to be King with a Commission to destroy the King that then reigned and his Family. The History represents this as done by the special *Command* of God himself; but he will have it to be only a *Conspiracy* of the Prophets against the House of *Abab*, merely to gratify their own Spite and Revenge without any divine Commission at all, tho' they feigned it the better to execute their Designs. This makes a vast Difference in the Cases. The true Question therefore is, first whether *God* himself had a *Right* to transfer the Crown from the House of *Abab*, and to order that whole Royal Family to be extirpated. And next, what Proof there is that the Prophet had such a *Command* or Commission from God.

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The first Question admits of an easy Decision. For not to urge that God by virtue of his supreme and absolute Dominion hath a sovereign Right to transfer Kingdoms from one Family to another, and to dispose of Mens Lives, and can put an End to them when he pleases without Injustice, even supposing them innocent: not to urge this, it is incontestible, that he hath a Right to punish his Creatures for their *Sins*, in that Way that seemeth most fit to his infinite Wisdom and Righteousness. And when particular Persons or Families have been remarkably wicked, all that own a Providence must acknowledge, that it is no unrighteous Thing in God to inflict remarkable Judgments or Calamities upon them, as a Punishment for their Crimes even to their utter Extirpation. Now the Case we are considering is that of a very wicked Family, in which there had been a Succession of Kings that had been guilty of many and great Vices and Crimes, and particularly of an open *revolling* from the Worship of the true God to the Worship of Idols, and that in a Nation that was peculiarly set apart and chosen above all other Nations to maintain the Worship of the Deity in a World overrun with *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*, and whose Constitution and Polity, which was of divine Appointment, was established on the Principle of worshipping the one only living and true God. These Princes had not only broken thro' and endeavoured to subvert these fundamental Laws of the State, and the original Contract and Covenant on which that Community was founded, and by which their Right to their Country and all their Privileges was suspended, but they had with the utmost Cruelty persecuted and endeavoured to destroy those that stood up for the antient Laws and Constitutions, and had compelled the People to violate them: and thus had shewn themselves the greatest Enemies to God, to the Laws; and to their Country, upon which they

they had brought many Calamities by their Wickedness. Now upon this View, will any say that it was *unjust* in God to deprive such a Family of the Royal Power of which they had made so ill an use, and even utterly to destroy them? If he had cut them off by Diseases, by Pestilence, by Thunder, or an immediate Stroke from Heaven, few would have pretended to dispute the Justice of it. And if God hath a Right to cut them off, he may do it in that Way that seemeth to him most fit, and therefore may do it by the Sword of others commissioned by him to destroy them, if this appears to him to be most proper to answer the Ends intended in the Punishment. If he had cut them off by an extraordinary Disease or immediate Stroke, this might have been attributed to Chance, it would not have been so evident on what Account this was inflicted. But his appointing one of another Family to be King, with an expresse Commission to extirpate that wicked Race in a declared Execution of the Sentence that had been pronounced against them long before for their Wickedness, tended to shew both the new King and the People the great Hainousness of those Crimes, and what Ruin it would bring upon them, if they should imitate that unhappy Family in that Idolatry and Wickedness, which had exposed them to such an exemplary Vengeance. And if the succeeding Kings and the People of *Israel* had made a just and wise Improvement of this Event, it might have prevented the Ruin of both, and all the Calamities that afterwards beset them in their final Desolation and Captivity. In which Case it would have been apparent, that this exemplary Punishment on *Ahab's* wicked Race was designed for the Benefit of the Whole: as the just Punishment of wicked Malefactors is fitted and designed to promote the general Good of the Community. And if it actually had not that Effect, it was their own Fault who did not make that use of it

it they might and ought to have done. And if upon such a view it appears that the Destruction of *Abab's* Family was entirely just as from God, then on Supposition that he sent and commanded his Prophet by his divine Authority to anoint *Jebu* King with a Commission to execute his righteous Vengeance on that wicked Family, there was nothing wrong in the Prophet's Conduct in delivering the Message God sent him upon: on the contrary, it would have been wrong, and an Act of Rebellion and Disobedience against God to have declined it.

But the Question remains, what *Proof* is there that God did indeed send the Prophet to anoint *Jebu*, and that all this was done by the divine Order and Appointment? And of this taking the whole Account as it lies before us in the sacred History, there is clear and convincing Evidence: As God had been pleased in his great Mercy to raise up eminent Prophets to *Israel* in the Time of this their great Degeneracy, in order to preserve the Knowledge of the true Religion among them, when they were in the utmost Danger of utterly losing and forsaking it; so he gave those Prophets the most convincing illustrious *Attestations* of their divine Mission, sufficient to have convinced Kings and People that they were indeed extraordinarily sent and inspired of God. More and greater Miracles were wrought by *Elijah* and *Elisba* in a few Years, than had been done for several hundred Years before, from the Days of *Moses* to that time. Thus it pleased God to order it in his great Wisdom and Goodness, because then there was greater Need of them. With regard to *Elijah* to give the greater Weight to his prophetick Mission, God having determined to punish that guilty People with a most grievous Dearth and Famine for their Wickedness and Idolatry, a Punishment which had been threatned in that Case in the Law itself, *Deut.*

xxviii. 23. so ordered it that it should be brought on at *Elijah's* Word, and should be removed at his Prayer. Upon a solemn Appeal to Heaven he gave a most illustrious *Testimony* to him as his faithful Prophet and Servant, in the Sight of the King and all the People at Mount *Carmel*. Two Companies of Men that were sent one after another to seize him, were at his Word consumed by *Fire from Heaven*. He raised the Dead, and was himself at length taken *bodily* in an extraordinary Manner into Heaven. *Elisba* that succeeded him in the prophetic Office had his divine Mission confirmed by no less extraordinary Attestations. At his Word the unwholesome Waters and barren Soil had new *Qualities* given them. At his Word the Syrian *Naaman* was healed of his Leprosy: and his own Servant *Gebazi* struck with it in a Moment, as a Punishment for his Baseness and Falshood. He was enabled as well as *Elijah*, to raise the Dead, which seems to be an Act of Dominion and Power peculiar to God himself, the Lord of Nature and Governor of the World. He gave the most extraordinary Proofs of a divine *Inspiration* and supernatural Knowledge, in his disclosing to the King of *Israel* the Councils which the King of *Syria* took in his Bed-chamber. At a time when the Armies of three Kings were ready to perish, he foretold both that immediately they should have Abundance of *Water* of which they stood in the utmost Need, and that they should obtain *Victory* over their Enemies, when there was no human Appearance of either. When *Samaria* was besieged by a vast Host of *Syrians*, and reduced to the Extremity of Distress by Famine, and no human Succour near, he expressly declared in the Name of God that the next Day there should be such a *Plenty* of all Things, that a Lord that stood by thought it scarce possible to be effected, even if God should open the Heavens, and pour down Provisions upon them from thence.

thence. And he also foretold that that Lord himself should see it, but should not eat of it. And both these Things were literally fulfilled, which it was impossible for any human Knowledge to foresee. With regard to the Destruction of *Abab's* Family, *Elijah* had by divine Inspiration expressly denounced it to *Abab* himself many Years before it happened, and had foretold *Abab's* own Death with this particular Circumstance, that the Dogs should lick his Blood where that of *Naboth* had been shed. It was also revealed to him that *Jehu* should be King over *Israel* near twenty Years before it happened, and he was commanded to anoint him, that is, to cause him to be anointed; for he was not to do it immediately himself, since the Time appointed for it in the divine Providence was not yet come; but he was to appoint *Elisba* to do it, who was to succeed him in the prophetic Office. Accordingly, when the Season came which God saw fit for executing the just Sentence that had been denounced so long before, the Prophet *Elisba* was put upon it by the same extraordinary divine Impulse and Authority by which he was enabled to work such astonishing Miracles above all human Power to perform, and to foretel Things above the reach of Man to foresee. And indeed, the Circumstances of the Affair itself, and the Manner of bringing it about shewed that there was an extraordinary Hand of God in it. *Elisba* only sent a Person to call out *Jehu* on a sudden from the Company where he was sitting, and anoint him King, and then the Man that did it fled. Upon this *Jehu* was immediately, and as it were in a Moment acknowledged by all the Captains and the whole Army, tho' there does not appear to have been any previous Concert, nor any Steps taken to prepare Matters for such a Revolution. This is a most surprising Event, and which must be ascribed to an extraordinary Influence of divine Providence.

It was scarce possible to foresee in a human Way that this would have had such an Effect. It rather might have been thought that it would have exposed the Prophet himself, and perhaps to use our Author's Expressions, *have endangered the whole Order*. But the Prophet *Elisba*, who was assured that it was from God, was not at all solicitous about the Issue of it, since he very well knew what the Event would be, without taking any of the Measures or Precautions that would have been necessary, if the Affair had depended merely on the Management of human Policy. As to this Writer's sneer that the *King, Queen, and all the House of Ahab were most religiously murdered in the Name of the Lord*; if *Jebu* had executed the Sentence denounced against the House of *Abab*, merely in Obedience to the Command of God, and not from a Principle of private Ambition or Cruelty, it would have been no more a Crime, nor to be accounted Murder, than it is for a Person commissioned by a just King or Magistrate, to put *Malefactors* to death in execution of the righteous Sentence pronounced against them.

Our Author before this had represented the Prophet *Elisba's* Management with *Hazael* the chief Captain of the King of *Syria*, as a remarkable Proof that the Prophets brought about their own Predictions by accomplishing in a natural Way what they had resolved upon before, see p. 306, 307. The Account he gives of this Matter is from the Beginning to the End one entire Misrepresentation, as any one will find that will compare it with the Account given us in the Place he himself refers to 2 *Kings* viii. 7, &c. He supposes the Present which *Benbadad* the King of *Syria* ordered *Hazael* to give to the Prophet (the Magnificence of which was such as became a King) to have been a Bribe from *Hazael* himself, tho' he does not tell us what the Bribe was given him for, or what

could be *Hazael's* view in it. Was it in *Elisba's* Power to set whomsoever he would on the Throne of *Syria* too, as he would persuade us it was in the Power of the Prophets by their Interest and Influence, to make whom they pleased Kings of *Israel*? He represents it as if *Elisba's* telling *Hazael* that he should be King of *Syria*, was to shew himself not ungrateful for what he had taken of the Captain. But if the Present had an Influence upon him, it should rather have bribed him to declare in Favour of the King, who had ordered that Present to be given him, than of the Captain who only delivered it to him from the King. The Prophet shewed the Exactness of his Fore-knowledge and divine Inspiration by the Answer he gave to *Hazael*, whereby he let him know, that the King should not die of the Disease, and yet that he should certainly die some other Way: as accordingly he did by the Hand of *Hazael*, who in all Probability had already concerted Measures for securing the Crown to himself upon *Benhadad's* Death, and had resolved to hasten his Death. And the Prophet here gives him to understand, that he was not ignorant of the Design he had formed; and then proceeds to tell him what execrable Cruelties he knew he would be guilty of against the People of *Israel*, when he should be King of *Syria*. This Writer indeed thinks proper to represent it as if *Hazael* had at that time no Design against his Master's Life or Crown at all, but was put upon it by the Prophet, who sent him away after having given him sufficient Instructions what he was to do, that is, that he was to murder his Master, and seize the Crown. And in order to account for the Prophet's putting *Hazael* upon this Murder and Treason, he tells us, that it is plain that *Elisba* here put *Hazael* into a most effectual Way to obtain the Kingdom, in Hopes that having been indebted to him for the Crown, he would favour his Country, and put an End to the War against *Israel*.

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And accordingly he represents him as having taken his Vows and Protestations, that if that should happen (i. e. if he should be King of Syria) he would favour Israel. Thus he is willing for once to allow the Prophet to have been a Patriot, and a Friend to his Country, that he may bring him in for having a Hand in the Death of the King of Syria. But this is a Piece of History entirely of the Author's own making. For there is not a Word of it in the Account given us of this Matter in the sacred Records. Nor can any thing be more absurd than to suppose that the Prophet put Hazael into the most effectual Way to obtain the Kingdom, in Hopes that he would favour his Country, and put an End to the War against Israel, when he very well knew that Hazael would prove a greater Plague to Israel than all the Kings that had been before him. How far the Prophet was from contributing to Hazael's Advancement to the Throne, is evident from the great Sorrow and Concern the Prospect of it gave him. He wept to think of the cruel Devastations that Hazael would make in Israel, and the Calamities he would bring upon that People. *I know*, says he, *the Evil thou wilt do unto the Children of Israel, &c.* Our Author here gives us a Cast of his Art, which may let us see what fair Dealing we are to expect from him; for whereas the Prophet saith, *I know*, he represents it as if he had only said, *I fear*, and had spoken of it as a Thing of which he was uncertain. But he plainly speaks of it as of a Thing which he was absolutely assured of by Revelation from God himself: and this drew Tears from the Eyes of that good Man and worthy Patriot. All that can be concluded from the whole Story is on the one Hand, the Exactness of the Prophet's Fore-knowledge, and his having the certain Knowledge of future Events extraordinarily communicated to him from God himself; and on the other Hand, his great Humi-

nity and Love to his Country. And this is a manifest Proof among many others that might be produced that the Things predicted by the Prophets were not of their own procuring, and that they did not merely foretel Things with a view to take Measures to accomplish what they had resolved upon before; tho' this Writer most absurdly produces this very Instance as a Proof of it: but they foretold them, because they knew by divine Inspiration they would certainly come to pass. Many of the Things they foretold were Things which were disagreeable to themselves, and which they would gladly have prevented, if it had depended upon their own Choice, as no doubt *Elisba* would have done *Hazael's* Advancement to the Throne of Syria.

The same Prophet *Elisba* gave a farther Proof of his divine Inspiration, in that when his Country was reduced to the extremest Misery and Distress, and seemed ruined beyond Redress thro' the Conquests and Devastations made by *Hazael* and his Successors, he expressly foretold when he was upon his Death-Bed the wonderful Change that would soon happen in Affairs by the glorious Victories of *Joash* King of *Israel* over the *Syrians*: and foretold precisely the Number of Victories he should obtain, viz. that he should vanquish the *Syrians* thrice. And I suppose this Writer will scarce pretend that in this Case too the Prophet took care to accomplish his own Predictions in a natural Way, and enabled the *Israelites* to beat the *Syrians* thrice after his own Death. And here by the way I would observe, how far that brave Prince *Joash* was from looking upon the Prophets as the great Enemies and Disturbers of their Country, and the Authors of all the Mischiefs and Calamities that befall the State. He rather regarded them as the greatest Defence and Protection of the Country by their excellent Counsels, and by their Prayers and Prevalency with God, as appears from the Lamenta-

tion he made over the dying Prophet *Elisha*, the Father and Head of the Prophets at that time. He wept over his Face, and said, *O my Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof*, 2 Kings xiii. 14—19. The very Word that *Elisha* himself had used concerning the Prophet *Elijah* when he was taken up into Heaven.

The Reign of *Jeroboam* that followed was a successful and glorious one. Our Author takes Notice of this, and after having observed that *this King was as great an Encourager of Idolatry as any that had been before him* (which is not true, for he only followed the Sin of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, which consisted in worshipping the true God after a wrong Manner, whereas the House of *Abah* had introduced the Worship of *Baal*, and the Heathen Deities, which was an Express and open Revolting from the God of *Israel*) he adds, that *this makes it evident, that the Toleration* (he should have said the *Establishment* for this was really the Cause) *of Idolatry had not been the real Cause of the Ruin and Devastation of this Country for above two hundred Years back*: as if *Jeroboam's* Idolatry was the Cause of his Success. But all that can be gathered from *Jeroboam's* Prosperity and Success, which had been plainly foretold by the Prophet *Jonah*, 2 Kings xiv. 25. is, that as the *Israelites* had been afflicted for their Sins thro' the just Judgment of God, so now it pleased him in his great Mercy to give them a *Respite* from their Calamities, and to try what Influence his Goodness and Indulgence would have upon them; to which it is expressly ascribed, *ver.* 26, 27. But they made a wrong use of their Prosperity: and it appears from the lively Admonitions of the Prophets, who lived at that Time, that all Manner of Vice and Wickedness abounded among them. And this their abusing the divine Goodness, and being neither reclaimed by his Mercies nor Judgments to Repentance, at last ended in their utter

utter Ruin. As to what this Author remarks, that *Jeroboam had restored the Observation of all the Sacrifices and Festivals of Egypt*; there is nothing of this in the Account given us of his Reign. It is probable indeed that he continued the *Feasts* which the first *Jeroboam* had appointed. But these seem only to have been in Imitation of those instituted in the Law of *Moses* with a small Variation. See *1 Kings* xii. 32, 33. Accordingly it appears from the Prophet *Hosea*, who prophesied in the Days of *Jeroboam* the Second, that in *Israel* at that time they had their *New Moons and Sabbath, and solemn Feasts*. He speaks of their *Wine-Offerings and Sacrifices to the Lord Jehovah*; and of the *Feast of the Lord, and solemn Day* as celebrated among them, *Hos.* ii. 4, 5, 11. And *Amos*, who prophesied at the same time, talks of their *Tithes and Free-will Offerings, their feast Days, and solemn Assemblies*, *Amos* iv. 4, 5. I shall not examine the Way our Author takes to account for *Jeroboam's* Victories over the *Syrians*: nor his Chronology that within five or six Years after this King's Death, the *Affryrians* destroyed *Damascus*, whereas it might be plainly shewn that it was above forty Years after his Death that this happened. The Confusions and civil Wars that followed the Death of *Jeroboam*, he would gladly attribute to the Intrigues of the Prophets, tho' there is not one Word or Circumstance in the History that can afford the least Pretence for such a Suspicion.

After having laid the Ruin and Captivity of *Israel* to the Charge of the Prophets, tho' if the *Israelites* had complied with their Advice and Exhortations their Ruin had been prevented; he next takes Notice of the bloody War between *Israel* and *Judab*, which he tells us lasted 260 Years, that is, during the whole time that the Kingdom of *Israel* subsisted. And this also he represents as he had done all the rest, as a War carried on upon

the Account of Religion, and endeavours to interest the Prophets in it, whom he represents as doing all they could to restore the Kingdom to the House of David, p. 320, 321. But all that he here offereth is one continued Misrepresentation. The War between Israel and Judah was so far from being perpetual and uninterrupted as he would have us believe, that we have no Account of any War between them from the Days of Baasha and Asa to the Time of Amaziah and Joash, which was the Space of above an hundred Years. Nor was there any War again between them from that time till the Reign of Abaz, which was above fourscore Years more. And whereas he represents the Kings of Judah, or the House of David, as all along Aggressors in the War, and as taking a merciless and outrageous Method with Israel after the Revolt, the very contrary is true. For tho' Rehoboam at first levied a great Army with a Design to reduce Israel to his Obedience, he desisted from it upon the Representation made to him by the Prophet Shemajah, 2 Chron. xi. 4. And it is therefore probable that the War which was afterwards carried on between Jeroboam and him, and his Son Abijah after him, was owing to Jeroboam's own Ambition, who thought, as being much more powerful, to have wrested Judah out of the Hands of the House of David. Baasha was the Aggressor in the War between him and Asa, out of the Jealousy he conceived against him, because many of the Israelites went up to Jerusalem to worship. The same may be observed concerning the War carried on between Israel and Judah in the Days of Abaz. Pekah King of Israel was the Aggressor, and joined Forces with the King of Syria. Vast Numbers of the People of Judah were then taken Captive, and used in the most merciless Manner, till upon the lively Representations made to the chief Men of Israel by the Prophet Oded, they dismissed them,

and treated them with great Humanity. See 2 Cbr. xxviii. 9—15. From whence it appears how falsely he represents the Prophets as all along fomenting the War between *Israel* and *Judab*. For as the Prophets declared against *Reboboam's* warring against *Israel*, so afterwards they equally declared against the Cruelty the *Israelites* used against their Brethren in *Judab*: And thus shewed themselves true Friends to both. And whereas he represents the Kings of *Judab* at the Instigation of the Prophets as entring into an Alliance first with the Syrians or Aramites, and then with the Assyrians in order to bring back the revolted Tribes, and force them to a Compliance, or else to root them out of the Land; it happens, that in both those Cases the Kings of *Judab* made those Alliances, not to obtain Dominion over *Israel*, but to defend themselves when invaded by *Israel*; as appears from the Account given of *Asa's* Alliance with the Syrians, 1 Kings xv. 17—19. And of *Abaz's* Alliance with the Assyrians, 2 Kings xvi. 5—9. And if those Alliances as he tells us ended in the Ruin both of *Israel* and *Judab*, the Prophets are not chargeable with this, since they did not approve those Alliances. And here by the Way we may observe the great Consistency of this Writer, who p. 303. brings it as a Charge against the Prophets, that they weakened and destroyed their Country by causing the Kings that hearkened to their Counsels to break all their Alliances with the neighbouring Nations, as not thinking it lawful to maintain any Peace or Friendship with Idolaters: and yet p. 321, 322. represents it as owing to the Counsels of the Prophets that the Kings of *Judab* entered into Alliances with the Syrians and Assyrians; And that these Politicks of the Prophets occasioned the Destruction of *Israel* and *Judab*; when the Truth is, neither of these is fairly represented. For on the one Hand the Prophets never advised or approved the Alliances

ances he speaks of with the *Syrians* and *Assyrians*; and on the other Hand, they never absolutely condemned all Alliances with foreign Nations*, nor urged them to break their Alliances with them under Pretence that they were Idolaters. See in what strong Terms the Prophet *Ezekiel* represents the great Guilt of King *Zedekiah* in breaking the Oath and Covenant he had made with the King of *Babylon*, and the Judgments he denounces against him for it, *Ezek.* xvii. 12. See also 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 13.

Thus have I gone thro' the Author's long Invec- tive, the Design of which is to represent the Pro- phets as the great Disturbers of their Country, and the principal Authors of all its Miseries, and of its final Ruin; and which for a Mixture of false Hi- story, and malicious Calumny, can hardly be pa- rallel'd.

CHAP. XI.

His Charge against the Prophets that lived before the Assyrian Captivity, that they declaimed only against Idolatry, and not against the other Vices and Immoralities of the People. The Falseness of this shewn. The excellent Scheme of Religion and Morals taught by the antient Prophets. His Pre- tence that the whole Nation of the Jews from the Time of Moses to Ezra were Sadducees or Deisti- cal Materialists; and that they received the first Notions of a future State from the Persian Magi, examined. His Account of the Change introduced into the Jewish Religion at that Time shewn to be groundless and absurd. A future State implied in

* See concerning this what hath been observed above, p. 144.

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the Law, and all along believed among the People, and clearly intimated in the Writings of the Prophets. This proved from several Passages.

THE remaining Charges our pretended *moral Philosopher* brings against the Prophets will admit of an easy Discussion. Tho' he represents it as the Design of the prophetic Institution to *preach up moral Righteousness, and keep the People to the moral Law*, yet he saith, that "from David's Rebellion, as he calls it, to the *Assyrian Captivity*, for the Space of above 350 Years, it is wonderful to observe how little these antient Prophets declaimed against the Vices and Immoralities of the People." And after having mentioned several hainous Crimes and Vices, he observes, that these are scarce taken Notice of, and in the mean while, nothing in a Manner is declared against but Idolatry, and the Necessity of Fire and Sword [urged] as the most proper and only effectual Means of rooting it out." He is pleased indeed to add, that "after the *Assyrian Captivity* the few Prophets that were left talked in another Strain; and urged the Necessity of not only abstaining from Idolatry, but of a true national Repentance and a strict Regard to the *moral Law*, and no Reliance upon Sacrifices and priestly Absolutions. See. p. 323, 324.

One would wonder with what *Front* this Writer could pretend to advance such an Assertion as this: Since it is impossible to look into the prophetic Writings, and not be convinced, that the same Spirit every where appears in all the Prophets that lived before and after the *Assyrian Captivity*, the same Zeal against Vice and Wickedness, the same Concern for the Honour of God, and the Interest of true Religion and moral Goodness. *Hosea, Amos, and Micah* incontestably lived and prophesied before the Destruction of *Samaria*, and the carrying

rying away *Israel* captive by the *Assyrians*; and they all expressly foretold that Destruction and Captivity, and that as a Punishment not only for their Idolatry, but for their other Immoralities and Wickedness. They particularly mention Swearing, Lying, Injustice, Cruelty, Bribery, Covetousness, Oppression of the Poor, Luxury, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Adultery, &c. for which they reprove them with a noble Zeal and impartial Freedom, without respect of Persons, or flattering the great Men more than the meanest of the People. And it is observable that they inveigh more frequently against their other Vices and Crimes than against their Idolatry itself, particularly the prophet *Amos* and *Micah* do so. And they urge them in the most patheticall Manner to the Practice of universal Righteousness, Justice, Mercy, &c. and let them know that without this their Sacrifices would be of no avail, and expressly declare the Preference of moral Duties to mere ritual Observances *. Nor do they once insist upon that which he represents as the only Thing they urged, viz. the Necessity of *Fire* and *Sword* as the only proper and effectual Means of rooting out Idolatry. That eminent Prophet *Isaiab* prophesied many Years before the *Assyrian* Captivity, tho' he also continued to prophesy after it, and the same Spirit every where appears in all his Prophecies. Every where doth he strongly reprove Sins and Vices of all Kinds, and exhorteth to real Repentance, and universal Righteousness and true Holiness in the most noble, and solemn, and patheticall Manner. This sufficiently shews with how little Regard to Truth or Decency this Writer ventures to charge the Prophets that lived before the *Assyrian* Captivity, as declaring against nothing but Idolatry.

* See for all this, *Hos.* iv. 1—3, 11. vi. 6, 8. vii. 1, 4, 5. x. 12. xii. 6. *Amos* ii. 6—8. iii. 10. iv. 1, 10—12. v. 14, 15, 21—24. vi. 3—6. viii. 4—8. *Micah* ii. 1, 2. iii. 2—4, 9—12. vi. 6—8, 10—13. vii. 2—6.

I shall not mention the Prophets that lived after that Time, particularly *Jeremiab* and *Ezekiel*, because the Author himself owns, that they urged the Necessity of a true national Repentance, and a strict Regard to the moral Law. And indeed it is impossible there should be stronger Declarations to this Purpose, than are to be frequently met with in those prophetical Writings. And yet afterwards in the very same Page where he seems to acquit the latter Prophets of the Charge he had advanced against the former, he really involves all the Prophets in general in the same Accusation. For he hath the Confidence to tell us, that the principal Cause of the great Corruption of Manners among the *Jews* after their Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity was owing to this, that *they had never been told before of any thing but Idolatry, as the Cause of all their Miseries and Calamities hitherto*; and that all manner of *Vices* and *moral Wickedness* had been approved and justified in *David* their great Pattern and Exemplar, p. 328. An Assertion as false as any Thing in his whole Book, and I think I need say no worse of it.

It is in the same Spirit of Calumny that he represents the Prophets as requiring only an *external Obedience* to the moral Law, *without regarding the Principle from which it proceeded, or whether it was free or forced*. p. 334. To this I need only oppose what he himself acknowledgeth, that *it may be proved from innumerable Testimonies out of the Law and the Prophets, that an inward spiritual Principle of Obedience as necessary to a State of true Religion and Virtue, was all along understood and insisted on during the legal Oeconomy*, p. 34. And whereas in the Passage above-cited he goes on to tell us, that *Mortification and Self-denial, and a Faith which can support Men under Adversity and above the World, an inward Purity of the Heart and Affections, and the Practice of universal Benevolence* and

and Charity, moral Truth, Righteousness and Peace with all Men, from the Prospect of Immortality and a future State of spiritual Happiness to be enjoyed with God and the Angels; this is a Religion which those holy Men the Naiioth Prophets never understood or Taught: Tis certain that no where is the Necessity of an inward Purity of the Heart and Affections, or of moral Truth and Righteousness more strongly inculcated than in those admirable Writings, no where can be found nobler Expressions of a lively Faith and Trust in God even under the greatest Afflictions and Adversities, and of holy Love to him, and Zeal for his Glory. A merciful, a kind and charitable Disposition of Mind towards our Neighbour, is there also frequently urged as absolutely necessary to the Character of a good Man, and as an essential Part of true Religion *. And when all People and Nations are so often called upon to bless and praise the Lord, and to rejoice in him; when so earnest a Desire is frequently expressed, that God's Way might be known upon Earth, and his Salvation unto all Nations; when the Happiness of the *Messiah's* Kingdom is so often described by its being a State of universal Benevolence and Peace, and mutual Good-Will among Mankind, and *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* are represented as sharing in the glorious Benefits of it; I cannot but think this discovers in the Prophets, a Spirit of extensive Benevolence, having in View the universal Happiness and Good of all Mankind, and not merely confined to that of their own Nation.

What he mentions concerning the Prospect of Immortality, and a future State of Happiness, as a Thing which the Prophets never understood or

* See the whole 58th Chapter of *Isaiab*, *Pf.* xxxvii. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. *Hof.* vi. 6. *Mic.* vi. 8. *Dan.* iv. 27. *Zach.* xii. 9.

taught,

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taught, deserves a more particular Consideration, as it is a Charge he frequently brings against the whole Old Testament Dispensation. He expressly declares, that before the Time of *Esdra*s, which was after the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, no *Jewish* Writer, Priest, or Prophet, had ever mentioned a Word of a general Resurrection and Judgment of good and bad Men, and a consequent future State of Rewards and Punishments, p. 46.

And that "From the Days of *Moses* till the Time of *Ezra*, which was a Period of about eleven hundred Years, the whole Nation of the *Jews* had been deistical Materialists or *Sadducees*, and had been never known to suffer any Thing for Religion, because they had no future Expectation that could make them Amends for it. And that it might be easily proved that the *Sadducees* in the Days of *Christ* and the Apostles, were not a new or modern Sect lately sprung up among them, but the true Remains of the ancient *Jews*."

And he had observed a little before, that "It was in the Time of the *Persian* Empire that a great Change of Religion was introduced among the *Jews*, by which they quitted their Idolatry, and embraced the Doctrines of the Immortality of the Soul, and the Resurrection of the Body, a final Judgment, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments for good and bad Men. And that after the *Jews* had received these Doctrines from the *Persian* Magians, they never relapsed into Idolatry more, but suffered Martyrdom for their Religion with the same Constancy, Zeal, and Firmness that the *Christians* have done since." p. 440, 441.

This pretended Account of the great Change of Religion among the *Jews* after the Time of *Ezra*, and which was owing to their Conversation with the *Persian* Magi, only shews that some Persons are willing to take up with any Scheme, how ab-

furd soever, that seems to favour the Prejudices
 they have conceived against the Holy Scriptures.
 It is true indeed that the Body of the *Jewish* Na-
 tion shewed a more general Aversion to Idolatry
 in the Times after their Return from the *Babylonish*
 Captivity, in which they had suffered so much for
 this and their other Crimes than ever they had done
 before. But can any Thing be more absurd than to sup-
 pose that they learned this Aversion to Idolatry from
 the idolatrous *Chaldeans*, or from the *Persian Magi*,
 the Adorers of the Sun and of Fire? And where-
 as he takes upon him to affirm, that from the Days
 of *Moses* till the Time of *Ezra*, none of the *Jews*
 had ever been known to suffer any Thing for their
 Religion; not to mention several of the *Prophets*,
 who in Defence of the true Religion and Law of
 God, exposed themselves to the bitterest Persecu-
 tions, and even to Death itself; the Instances of
Shadrach, *Meshech*, and *Abednego*, and of *Daniel*,
 are illustrious Examples of Constancy in Religion
 in Opposition to all the Terrors of this World, at
 the same Time that the Wisemen of *Babylon* com-
 plied with the idolatrous Injunctions. As to his
 Insinuations concerning the *Jews* learning Religion
 from the *Persian Magi*, if a Change of Religion
 must be admitted among the *Jews*, it ought with
 much greater Probability be supposed that they had
 learned it from the *Babylonians* than from the *Per-
 sians*; since during their long Captivity in *Babylon*,
 the Body of the People had almost forgotten their
 ancient Language, and had accustomed themselves
 to that of the *Chaldeans*. But it is certain that
 they did not adopt their Religion, which was *Ido-
 latry*, on the Account of which, as well as for In-
 justice, Cruelty, and Tyranny, Judgment is de-
 nounced against *Babylon* by the *Prophets*. When
 the *Jews* returned from *Babylon*, in the first Year
 of *Cyrus*, under the Conduct of *Zerubbabel* and
Jeshua, which was before they could be supposed
 to

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to have much Commerce with the *Persians*, who had but just conquered the *Babylonish* Empire, they immediately upon their Return set up their old Religion, according to the Law of *Moses*. And afterwards *Ezra* and *Nebemiab*, who came by the Allowance of the *Persian* Emperors, did not reform the *Jewish* Religion and Polity, by bringing it to the Model of other Countries, but by bringing all Things as near as possible to the original Constitution as appointed in that Law, and they vigorously opposed and censured every Deviation from it. And as to those of the *Jews* that did not return to *Judea*, but continued still dispersed throughout the several Provinces of the *Persian* Empire, it appears, that far from adopting the *Persian* Religion as their own, they strictly adhered to their own particular Laws and Customs; and from hence it was that *Haman* took Occasion to expose them to the publick Hatred, and procured a Decree for their Extirpation. *Esth.* iii. 8.

Any one that considers the most remarkable and distinguishing Principles of the *Persian* Magi, will soon observe a vast Difference between them and the *Jews*. The main Principle of the *Magian* Religion was the Acknowledgment of two Principles, the one *good* and the other *evil*, both of which they acknowledged to be Gods, and to both they paid their *Adorations*. Which was entirely contrary to the very fundamental Principle of the *Jewish* Religion. According to Dr. *Hyde*'s own Account of the ancient *Persians*, which this Writer refers to, they fell very early into *Sabism*, or worshipping the Host of Heaven, and tho' he supposes *Abraham* to have reformed this, he owns that after a Time they relapsed into it again. Tho' they did not intirely lose the Knowledge of the true God yet they paid their *Adorations* to the heavenly *Luminaries*. And how expressly this is prohibited in the Law of *Moses*, and in the prophetical Writing

none that ever read the Scriptures needs to be informed. And when *Magism* was introduced among the *Persians*, itill they worshipped the *Sun* and the *Fire*. And something like this we read of among the *Jews* before the *Babylonish* Captivity. Some of their idolatrous Kings had *Priests that burnt Incense to the Sun*; and we read of *Horses which they had given or dedicated to the Sun*, which that great reforming King *Josiah* destroyed. *2 Kings* xxiii. 5, 11. And the Prophet *Ezekiel* among other *Abominations*, represented to him in the prophetic Vision as practised at *Jerusalem*, even by the Elders of the People, a little before the utter Destruction of the City and Temple by the *Chaldeans*, saw some with their Backs towards the Temple of the Lord, and their Faces toward the East, worshipping the Sun toward the East. *Ezek.* viii. 16. But this as well as all other Kinds of idolatrous Worship, after their Return from the Captivity, was held in Abomination by the *Jews*; tho' one should think, if they had learned their Religion from the *Persian* Magi, they should rather have been confirmed in it. Add to this, that another Thing remarkable among the *Persians* was that they sacrificed on *Hills* and *High-Places* in the open Air, and had no Temples*; whereas the *Jews* were not allowed to offer Sacrifices on *High-Places*, or any where but at the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and shewed a remarkable Zeal for rebuilding that Temple, after their Return from the Captivity, notwithstanding all the Opposition they met with in that Undertaking.

* I know Dr. *Prideaux*, in his Account of *Zoroaster*, supposes that he caused Temples to be built, whereas the *Persians* had none before; but in this he seems to be mistaken, since there are express Authorities to shew that long after the Time of *Zoroaster* the *Persians* were without Temples, as Mr. *Moyle* has I think clearly proved.

There is no Likelihood therefore, that the *Jews* should have learned their Religion from the *Persian Magi*, to some of whose main Principles of Religion they had the utmost Aversion. Indeed if the Account Dr. Prideaux gives of *Zoroaster*, and the Reformation wrought by him in the Religion of the *Magians*, may be depended on, it seems evident that the very Reverse of our Author's Supposition is true; and that instead of the *Jews* learning their Religion from the *Persian Magi*, or *Zoroaster*, he derived from the *Jews* the Reforms or Alterations he wrought in the antient Religion of the *Magians*. See *Prid. Connect.* Part I. Book IV. And if it be true that the *Persian Magi* had received and taught the Doctrines of the Unity of God, a Resurrection from the Dead, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, for many hundred Years before *Zoroaster* (whom our Author supposes to have been Contemporary with *Esdra*s); who did not in these Cases pretend to introduce any new Religion, but to restore the true old *Abrahamick Religion*, which had been in some Respects corrupted; All which he thinks Dr. Hyde in his Book *De Religione veterum Persarum* makes very clear. See p. 348, 349. If this be so, it may very justly be supposed that this *Abrahamick Religion* was much better preserved amongst the *Jews*, the direct Descendants from *Abraham*, whom they looked upon as the great Founder of their Nation, and for whose Memory they always had the profoundest Veneration.

This Writer indeed takes upon him to affirm, that the *Jews* were entire Strangers to the Doctrines of a Resurrection, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future Judgment, till after the Time of *Ezra*; that the whole Nation had been till then, *deistical Materialists* or *Sadducees*; and that the *Sadducees* in our Saviour's Time were not a modern Sect, but the true Remains of the antient *Jews*, who stuck

back to the Principles of their great Lawgiver *Moses*. Whereas the very contrary to this is true, that the *Sadducees* were a modern Sect never known among the *Jews*, till long after the Days of *Ezra*, till then the Immortality of the Soul, the Existence of Spirits, and a future State of Retributions were universally believed in that Nation. They were indeed little better than a Sect of *Jewish Epicureans*, and always few in Number, and of ill Reputation with the Body of that Nation; and therefore they were wont to dissemble their Principles, whenever they had a Mind to make an Interest with the People.

I had already Occasion to observe, that the Immortality of the Soul and a future State was a Doctrine not denied or controverted when the Law of *Moses* was given, which may be supposed to be one Reason why it is not there so expressly asserted. But it is all along supposed and implied in that Law. The noble Account *Moses* gives of Man's original Formation, that he was made in the Image of God himself, and after his Likeness, which tends to give us high Notions of his original Dignity; his representing the Body of Man as formed out of the Dust of the Ground, but giving a different Account of the Soul, whose noble vital active Nature he signifies by calling it the Breath of Life, which he represents as immediately inspired by God himself into the Body duly organized: The frequent Mention he makes of the Apparition of Angels, (which is scarce reconcileable to the Doctrine of the *Sadducees*, who did not acknowledge either Angels or Spirits, Acts xviii. 8.) and of the Intercourse between Men and the Inhabitants of the heavenly World; his Account of *Enoch's* having walked with God, and that he was not, for God took him, which must be understood of his taking him to another State, as a Reward of his distinguished Piety; and is by the Apostle justly

interpreted of God's *translating* him that *he should not see Death*. Heb. xi. 5. Another Instance of which there afterwards was in *Elijah* : His representing the most eminent Patriarchs and Favourites of God, as confessing themselves to be *Strangers* and *Sojourners* here on Earth, and calling this their present Life the *few and evil Days of their Pilgrimage* ; from whence it is natural to infer, that they did not expect their Recompence here, but *looked for a better Country, that is an heavenly* : The Account he gives of the Covenant God made with *Abraham*, whereby he engaged to be a God unto him, his *Shield*, and his *exceeding great Reward*, which must have a farther View than this present State, since *Abraham*, who for the most Part lived a wandering unsettled Life as a Sojourner in the Land of *Canaan*, met with no Reward here that could justly answer the Import of so glorious a Covenant and Promise : His representing God as describing himself under the Character of the *God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and thus challenging a special Relation to them as their God and Portion, some Ages after those Patriarchs were dead, which plainly shews that they were not utterly lost and extinguished in the Grave ; since he is *not the God of the Dead but of the Living* ; from whence our Saviour draws an Argument against the Sadducees, to prove the Resurrection and a future State : The Account *Moses* gives of the Hopes and Expectations of *dying Jacob*, when just before his Death, in the midst of his prophetic Benedictions to his Sons, he breaks forth into that Exclamation expressive of his Hope and his Desire, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord* : His representing *Balaam* expressing his Desire, that he might *die the Death of the Righteous, and that his last End might be like his* : All these are plain Intimations of the Belief of a future State ; that *Moses* himself believed it, and that it was the Faith of the antient Patriarchs. The Existence of

good and evil *Spirits* separate from Man, is evidently implied in several Passages in the Books of *Moses*; and that this was a Notion that then obtained generally among the People, may be concluded from the Prohibitions there made not to consult with those that had *familiar Spirits*, or with *Necromancers*, i. e. those that pretended to consult the Dead, and to raise their Ghosts to enquire by; like the Woman at *Endor*, of whom we have an Account 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 3, 7. And by the Way I would observe, that when *Saul* so earnestly desired to have the Soul of *Samuel* raised that he might enquire of him, this plainly shewed the Persuasion he had of the Existence of the Souls of Men in a separate State after Death, and which was no Doubt the common Belief in that Time. The very Notion which all along obtained among the *Jews* of Prophets and inspired Persons, who had Intercourse with God and Angels, and were enabled to foretel future Events, plainly shews the Belief they had of an invisible World of Spirits. Hence the *Epicureans*, who denied the Immortality of the Soul and a future State, laughed at all these Things. And doth not this Writer himself tell us, that the common People among the *Jews* believed the Prophets, *had an immediate and free Conversation with God, Angels, and departed Souls, from whom they were supposed to receive all their superior Knowledge and Intelligence.* p. 284. And how this is consistent with his asserting the *whole Nation* to have been all this Time *deistical Materialists, or Sadducees*, who believed there were no Angels or departed Souls, is hard to conceive.

Not to insist on that noble Passage in *Job*, where he speaks so clearly of the Resurrection of the Body; for that it relates to the Resurrection of the Body, and cannot without great Constraint upon the Words be applied to any Thing else, might I think be clearly shewn; and if *Job*, who was of

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the Posterity of *Abraham*, and lived in *Arabia*, had such Notions of the Resurrection and a future State, we may well suppose that the *Israelites* were not Strangers to it; I say not to insist upon this, there are many Passages in the *Psalms*, and other prophetical Writings, which plainly shew this. *David* speaking of ungodly Men, represents them as the Men of this World who have their Portion in this Life, in Opposition to whom he declares his own Hope that he should behold the Face of God in Righteousness, which is the very Expression made use of in the New Testament, to signify the spiritual Happiness of the Saints in a future State; and that when he should awake (which may be justly understood of rising again from the Dead, since Death is so usually represented under the Notion of a Sleep) he should be satisfied with his Likeness. *Pf. xviii. 14, 15.* Those Words of his, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see Corruption*, shew *David's* own Belief of a Resurrection and a future State, tho' they ultimately relate to the *Messiah*, in whom alone this was properly and literally accomplished. And when it is added, that in God's Presence is Fullness of Joy, and at his right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore. *Pf. xvi. 10, 11.* This is an excellent and comprehensive Description of the Happiness reserved for good Men in the heavenly State. And when the Psalmist *David* represents God as having established his Throne in the Heavens, and gives that noble Account of the blessed Angels there, that they excel in Strength, and do his Commandments, hearkening to the Voice of his Word, and in a divine Rapture calls upon them to bless the Lord. *Pf. ciii. 19-21.* This shews the Notion good Men then had of those holy and happy Spirits, which is absolutely inconsistent with their being *Materialists*, or *Sadducees*, and what they thought of the Perfection of Happiness and Pu-

rity

city in the heavenly World: And is no obscure Imagination that they had the same Hopes, for Substance, of the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable Company of Angels there, which the Saints express under the New Testament. See *Heb. xii. 22.* In the 49th Psalm, Ver. 14, 15. it is plainly signified, that how rich or prosperous soever the Wicked might be here on Earth, yet they must be laid in the Grave, and the Upright should have Dominion over them; but that God would redeem his faithful Servants from the Power of the Grave, and would receive them to himself. The Prophet Asaph when perplexed with the Thoughts of the worldly Prosperity of the Wicked, declared that he was satisfied by entering into the Sanctuary of God, and considering the Destruction that should come upon them: And for his own Part he expresseth his Desire and Hope in this excellent Manner, *Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart and my Portion for ever.* See the 73^d Psalm. When the Prophet Habakkuk makes that noble Declaration, *Although the Fig-Tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vine; the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat; the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stall: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation;* as it shews with what Truth this Writer affirms, that none of the Prophets ever understood or taught a Faith which can support Men under Adversity, and above the World; so it shews that they did not look upon the Reward they expected as consisting merely in temporal Prosperity, or a worldly Affluence; that their Hopes were of a higher and nobler Nature, not merely confined within the narrow Limits of this present Life,

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which could not possibly furnish such glorious Conceptions, or lay a Foundation for such eminent Acts of Faith and Spiritual Joy, under the greatest outward Difficulties and Distresses.

It is expressly declared, that *the Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness, but the Righteous hath Hope in his Death.* Prov. xiv. 32. And that at Death *the Dust*, that is, the Body, *shall return to Earth as it was, but the Spirit shall return unto God that gave it.* Eccles. xii. 7. Sinners are called upon to consider amidst their vicious Pleasures and Excesses, that for all these Things God will bring them into Judgment. Eccles. xi. 9. And it is expressly asserted, that God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccles. xii. 14. And yet this Writer hath the Confidence to affirm, that no Jewish Writer, before the Days of Ezra, ever mentioned a Word of a future Judgment. The Prophet Isaiah after having observed, that *the Righteous perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart; and merciful Men are taken away, none considering that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come,* immediately adds *He, i. e. the righteous Man, whom he supposes to have perished or died, and to be taken away from this World, and the Evil of it, shall enter into Peace.* Which can only be understood of a State of Rest and Happiness, which is the usual Meaning of the Word *Peace* in the sacred Writings. And he there describes that future Happiness in metaphorical Expressions, by saying *they, i. e. the righteous and merciful Men, whom he represents as having separated out of this Life, shall rest in their Beds, each one walking in his Uprightness.* Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Those Words of the same Prophet are justly looked upon as containing at least a manifest Allusion to the Resurrection of the Dead: *Thy dead Men shall live, together with my dead Body shall they arise: Awake and sing ye that dwell*

dwell in Dust: for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and The Earth shall cast out her Dead. Isa. xxvi.

19. To which may be added those Words of *Hosea*, *I will ransom them from the Power of the Grave: I will redeem them from Death. O Death, I will be thy Plagues; O Grave, I will be thy Destruction. Hos. xiii. 14.* But it is still more clearly expressed in the Book of *Daniel*, *Many that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt. Dan. xii. 2.* When in stating the Justice and Equity of the divine Proceedings, in the 18th Chapter of *Ezekiel*, God is represented as declaring with the greatest Solemnity, as a Matter of immutable and eternal Certainty, concerning every Man whatsoever that should persist in a Course of Sin and Disobedience, that he should *surely die*; and concerning every good and righteous Man that he should *surely live*, he should *not die*; it is evident this cannot be understood merely of temporal Life and Death, or of worldly Prosperity and Adversity, since it is undeniable that both these in many Instances equally befall the Righteous and the Wicked; as the wise Man observes, *Eccles. ix. 1, 2.* and must therefore be understood to extend to a State of Happiness or Misery, after this Life is at an end.

This may suffice to shew the Falshood and Injustice of that Charge which this Writer brings against *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and the whole *Jewish Nation*, till the Days of *Ezra*, that they were deistical Materialists or *Sadducees*. And now I have gone through the several Objections scattered in different Parts of his Book against the Old Testament; and perhaps I shall be thought to have examined them more particularly than they deserve. I now proceed to what he offers with a View to destroy the Authority of the *New Testament*.

CHAP. XII.

A Transition to the moral Philosopher's Objections against the New Testament. Tho' he pretends a very high Respect for our blessed Saviour, yet he insinuates several Reflections upon his Conduct and Character. Those Reflections shewn to be groundless and unjust. Our Lord did not comply with the Prejudices of the People in any Thing contrary to Truth, or to the Honour of God. He was far from assuming to be a temporal Prince, yet he all along claimed to be the Messiah promised and foretold by the Prophets. The Author's Pretence that he renounced that Character at his Death, shewn to be false. The Messiah spoken of by the Prophets, was not merely to be a national Deliverer of the Jews, nor were the Benefits of his Kingdom to be confined to that Nation only, but to be extended to the Gentiles. This shewn from the Prophecies themselves. The Attestation given to Christ's divine Mission, by the Prophecies of the Old Testament, considered and vindicated.

IN many of the Objections that have been hitherto considered, we have had plain Proofs of the Malice and Disingenuity of this Writer; but in what remains with regard to the *New Testament* there is still greater Reason to complain of his Conduct. As to the *Old Testament*, he acts the Part of an open Enemy, tho' an Enemy that hath little Regard to any Thing that can be called fair or honourable, and who seems to govern himself by that Maxim, *Dolus an virtus quis in heste requirat?* But when he speaks of the *Gospel Revelation*, he frequently puts on the Appearance of a Friend. He affects to speak honourably of *Jesus Christ*, and of the Religion he taught. He expressly declares himself to be a

Christian

Christian on the Foot of the New Testament, p. 359. and talks in pretty strong Terms of the signal Advantages of the Gospel-Revelation, and seems to blame those that do not set a due Value upon it. In the Beginning of this Book I have quoted a long and remarkable Passage to this Purpose to which I refer the Reader; and several other Passages might be produced that are no less strong and exprefs. See particularly, p. 358, 359, 392, 394, 411. But all this is only the better to carry on his Design against *Christianity*, by seeming to speak favourably of it whilst he really uses his utmost Efforts to subvert it. This will be evident to any one that considers the bare Reflections he insinuates upon our blessed Lord himself: his more open Attempts against the Character of the *Apostles*, and against the Proofs they brought of their divine Mission; especially those taken from the extraordinary Gift and Powers of the Holy Ghost in the Apostolical Age: the Account he gives of the false and absurd *Jewish Gospel*, which he pretends they all preached except the Apostle *Paul*, and of the great Differences among them about Points of the highest Consequence and Importance: the Endeavours he uses to destroy the Credit of the whole *Canon* of the New Testament, and to shew that it is not to be depended on for a right Account either of *Doctrines* or *Facts*: besides the Pains he takes to misrepresent and expose some particular Doctrines of Christianity. I shall take some Notice of what he offers with regard to each of these. And shall begin with considering his Insinuations against the Character of our blessed Saviour himself, notwithstanding he frequently affects to speak of him with great seeming Veneration. He commends him, p. 168. among other Things for this, that he did not like other Lawgivers in any Instance give up the Cause of Virtue and the common Good of Mankind, to comply with the prevailing Prejudices

judices of the People. And yet he would have us believe, that in compliance with the Prejudices of the People*, he justified the Gospel-Scheme on the Foot of Moses and the Prophets; that he not only asserted the Authority of those Writings, tho' they only falsely pretended to divine Inspiration, but imposed a Sense upon them which he knew was not their Sense, and put that false Sense upon the Jews for the real original Intention of the Holy Ghost, and particularly that he pretended to be the Person that had been foretold and spoken of by the Prophets, under the Character of the *Messiah*; whereas according to this Writer he himself could not but be sensible that the Prophets had never spoken of him at all; but of some temporal Prince that should some time or other rise up in *Judea*, and deliver the Jews from their Enemies.

But this is not all. He represents him as suffering himself to be carried about for a Twelvemonth together by the Jewish Mob all over the Country, and to be declared their *Messiah* (i. e. their temporal Prince in Opposition to *Cesar*, which is the only Sense he puts upon that Expression) and that they had led him in Triumph to Jerusalem, and proclaim-

But certainly he that on all Occasions declared with so noble a Zeal and Freedom against the Traditions of the Elders for which the Jews had the highest Veneration, and detected the Hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom the People admired and revered as holy Persons, would have declared with equal Zeal against the Law of Moses itself, if he had looked upon it to be as this Author represents it, a wretched Scheme of Superstition, Blindness, and Slavery, contrary to all Reason and common Sense, imposed upon them under the specious Pretence of a divine Institution. And he would not have deserved the Name of a true Reformer in Religion, if he had not endeavoured to undeceive the People, and to detect and expose so pernicious an Imposture. And his not doing so, but all along representing that Law as divine, and never once in the whole Course of his Ministry, dropping an Insinuation to the contrary, is a manifest Proof that he himself looked upon it to be of divine Original and Authority.

ed him King in this Sense but three Days before he was apprehended, without his opposing it. That therefore the Jewish Chief-Priests and Rulers were under a Necessity of doing what they did, in order to save their Country from Ruin. That tho' they could not prove that he had made any Pretensions to the Crown against Cesar, yet they presumed he must have given the People some Encouragement that Way, or else so strong and general an Expectation could never have been raised and kept up. And our Author himself observes, that had he renounced any such Pretensions sooner, as he did at last, the People would all have forsook him, as they did as soon as they found he was not for their turn, and that he had, as they thought, betrayed them. Thus it is evident that he justifies our Lord's Murderers, and represents them as only having acted as became good Patriots to prevent the Ruin of their Nation*: and insinuates

that
 * Whatever Glosses the Chief Priests, the Scribes and Pharisees might think proper to put upon it in their Council, and however they might colour over their Design with a Pretence of Zeal for the publick Good, John xi. 47, 48, &c. yet it is evident from the whole Evangelick History, that the real Motive was their Malice and Envy; because with an impartial Zeal he had rebuked their Crimes and Vices, and detected their Hypocrisy, and opposed their Authority and Traditions. Hence we read so often of their being filled with Rage against him, and taking Counsel to slay him. Their Malice was so apparent that Pilate himself could not but observe it. If he had believed that Jesus had set himself up for a Prince of the Jews in Opposition to Cesar, it concerned him more than it did them to prevent it. But he knew that the Chief Priests had delivered him for Envy, Mark xv. 10. and therefore endeavoured to get him freed from Punishment. And whereas this Writer to excuse the Chief Priests, &c. lays his Death upon the Multitude, who he pretends were enraged at him for at last disclaiming his being their Messiah; on the contrary, it is evident, that it was the Chief Priests and Elders that moved and persuaded the People to do what they did, Matt. xxvii. 20. Mark xv. 11. And their Honesty appears in this, that they accused him to Pilate as perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give Tribute to Cesar, Luk.

that he brought his own Death upon himself, by having encouraged the *Jewish Mob* to take him for their *Messiah* or temporal King, and to proclaim him to be so but three Days before; and that he never renounced these Pretensions till he was before the *Roman Governor*. And if so, I know not upon what Foundation he there represents him as a *glorious Martyr and Confessor* for the Truth. Thus his determined Malice against our blessed Lord plainly discovers itself from under the Disguise he endeavours to throw over it. See p. 350—353.

But it may be easily proved that these Insinuations are as false as they are malicious. Nothing is more evident than that on the one Hand our Lord all along disclaimed all Pretences to the being a temporal Prince in opposition to *Cesar*; tho' this Writer insinuates, that he never renounced these Pretensions till he came upon his Trial before *Pilate*: and that on the other Hand, he all along claimed to be the *Messiah* foretold and spoken of by the Prophets, tho' he affirms that he renounced that Character upon his Trial, and died upon that *Renunciation*.

As to the first, not only did he withdraw when the Populace would have taken him by Force to have made him a King, John vi. 5. but to avoid all Appearance of setting up for a temporal Sovereignty, when one desired him to speak to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him, he answered, *Man who made me a Judge or a Divider over you?* Luke xii. 14. There was nothing he more severely rebuked among his Disciples than ambitious Contentions who should be greatest; and he declared, that he himself came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for

xxiii. 2. tho' they knew that Accusation was false, and that when the Question was proposed to him, he had required them to render unto *Cesar* the Things which are *Cesar's*.

many. He declared, both to his own Disciples and to the Multitude, that if any Man would come after him, that is, would be his Disciple, *he must deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow him.* Instead of raising them to Expectations of great worldly Advantages, as he expressly foretold his own grievous Sufferings and Death, so he declared that his Disciples should be *hated and persecuted of all Men for his Name's sake*, and that *in this World they should have Tribulation.* And the Rewards he promised to those that should believe and obey him, were not the Riches and Honours of this present World, but the spiritual and eternal Rewards of a future State.

But tho' he so plainly disclaimed all Pretensions to worldly Dominion and Sovereignty here on Earth, yet it is certain that he claimed to be the *Messiah* that had been promised and foretold from the Beginning. From whence it is evident, that he did not look upon the *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets to be as our Author represents him, merely a temporal Prince. *John* the Baptist, when he was sent to, plainly and openly declared that he was not the *Messiah* or the Christ. But did our Lord Jesus ever during the whole Course of his personal Ministry, make such a Declaration concerning himself? far from it. Whenever any gave him the Title of the *Christ*, the *Son of David*, or any of the other peculiar Characters which were made use of to signify the *Messiah*, he never once rejected it, or rebuked those who thus addressed him: on the contrary, when *Peter* in the Name of the Disciples made that noble Confession, *Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God*; Jesus answered him, *Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven,* Matt. xvi. 17. So he approves *Martha's* illustrious Confession, *I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God which should come into the World,*

John

John xi. 27. And when the High-Priest upon his Trial before the *Jewish* Council adjured him by the living God, to tell them, whether he was *the Christ the Son of the Blessed*? He answered directly, *I am*. And then adds, *and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the Right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven*. Where he evidently applies to himself what the Prophet *Daniel* saith of the *Messiah* under the Character of the *Son of Man*, and which by this Writer's own Acknowledgment all the *Jews*, and Jewish Christians understood of the *Messiah*. See *Mark* xiv. 61, 62. *Dan.* vii. 13, 14. And this was the pretended Blasphemy for which they condemned him. And when he was before *Pilate*, tho' he told him that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, yet even then so cautious was he of saying any Thing that should look like a disclaiming the Character of the *Messiah*, that when *Pilate* asked him whether he was a *King*, he answered that he was; that is, that he was that Person that had been promised and foretold by the Prophets under that Character. See *John* xviii. 37. *Matt.* xxvii. 11. *Luke* xxiii. 3. Accordingly *Pilate* when he brought him out to the *Jews* said, *behold your King*. And this was the Crime of which the Chief-Priests, and by their Instigation the Multitude accused him to the Governor, tho' our Author pretends that the Reason of their Rage against him, was his disclaiming before *Pilate* that he was their King or *Messiah*. So far therefore is it from being true, that our Saviour renounced his being the *Messiah* in the prophetical Sense, and died upon that Renunciation, as this Writer with an unparallel'd Confidence in Falshood over and over asserts; that the very contrary is true; that he declared himself to be the *Messiah* upon his Trial, and died upon that Declaration. His asserting it was the Cause of his Condemnation by the *Jewish* Council, and was the Crime urged by them against him before *Pilate*

This

This was in an especial Manner the glorious *Truth* for which he died a *Martyr*, and which he sealed with his *Blood*. And after his Resurrection he opened the Understandings of his Disciples that they might know the Scriptures, and explained to them the Passages in the prophetical Writings relating to himself as the true *Christ*, that had been there promised and foretold. And this the Apostles, and the Apostle *Paul* as much as any of them, preached under the Influence of his divine Spirit. Now what *Idea* does this Writer give us of all this? That this pretended Messiahship of *Jesus* was all a Fiction. The Prophets had never spoken of him at all, nor of any *Messiah*, but a temporal Prince and national Deliverer of the *Jews*, and of them only. And what is this but to declare that our Lord *Jesus Christ* was a *Deceiver*, and that the whole Gospel is one grand *Imposture*, and the Article so much insisted upon there, and which our Author makes to be the only proper Article or Doctrine of Religion peculiar to the Gospel Dispensation, see p. 349. is an absolute Falshood, and gross Impostition.

I shall not enter upon a distinct Consideration of the Prophecies relating to the *Messiah*, in order to shew how amply they are fulfilled in our Lord *Jesus Christ*; this would carry me too far, and is a Subject which hath often been largely and justly handled. I shall only briefly observe, that whereas there are two Things which this Writer represents as necessarily entring into the Character of the *Messiah*, as foretold by the Prophets: the one is, that he was to be no more than a *temporal Prince*, and his Kingdom and Dominion was to be of a worldly Nature: the other is, that he was only to be a King of the *Jews*, and to be a national Deliverer or Saviour of them only, and not of the *Gentiles*: the contrary to both these may be manifestly proved from the Prophecies themselves

that relate to this Matter. It will be easily granted that the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, and the Advantages and Blessings of it are sometimes represented by Figures and Emblems drawn from the Glory and Magnificence of earthly Kingdoms. Nor is this to be wondered at by any one that considers the Nature of the prophetical Stile, which delighted in bold and pompous Figures and Allusions, and often represented Things of a spiritual Nature under Images drawn from the Things of this World: but at the same time there are many Things said by them which plainly shew that the Kingdom ascribed to him, is not like the Kingdoms of this World in its Nature and Design, but erected for far nobler Purposes. That the great and principal Design of it was to establish Truth and Righteousness, and spread the Knowledge of God and Religion, and mutual Benevolence and Charity amongst Mankind. This is the manifest Import of those remarkable Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* and his Kingdom which we have, *Isa.* xi. 1—10, and *Isa.* xlii. 1—7. That this is the Name whereby he should be called *the Lord our Righteousness*, *Jer.* xxiii. 5, 6. And in the ninth Chapter of *Daniel*, where *Messiah the Prince* is so expressly promised, the End of his coming is signified to be to *finish the Transgressions, to make an End of Sin, to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness*, *Dan.* ix. 24, 25, &c. The same Person that is sometimes represented as a glorious King, is also represented as a *Priest for ever*, not after the Order of *Aaron*, as it must have been if the Law of *Moses* had continued in Force under his Reign, but *after the Order of Melchisedeck*, *Psa.* cx. 4. He is also described as a great *Prophet*, to whom the People were commanded to *bearken*, *Deut.* xviii. 15—18. And this Character of the *Messiah* was so well known, that even the *Samaritan* Woman could say, *I know that Messiah cometh*, *John* iv. 42.

which is called Christ: when he is come he will tell us all Things, John iv. 25. In that remarkable Prophecy relating to the *Messiah*, and which was understood of him by the antient *Jews*, from *Isa. lii. 13*, to the End of the *fifty third* Chapter, as it is foretold concerning him, that he should be *exalted and be very high*, so his deep *Humiliation*, and most grievous *Sufferings*, are strongly described in a Variety of emphatical Expressions, and the Reasons and Ends of those Sufferings are plainly signified; that it was for *our Transgressions* that he was to suffer; that he was to *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*, and to *bear the Sins of many*, that by his *Stripes we might be healed*; and that by his *Knowledge he should justify many*, and should *make Intercession for the Transgressors*. In the illustrious Prophecy concerning the *Messiah*, *Mal. iii. 1*. he is described under the Character of the *Messenger of the Covenant*, and what Kind of Covenant that was we are informed, *Jer. xxxi. 31—35*. from which it appears that it was to be a *New Covenant* distinct from that made with the *Israelites* when they were brought out of *Egypt*, and that the promised Blessings of it were to be of a spiritual Nature; such as that God would *write his Law in their Heart*, and teach them to *know him*, and *forgive their Iniquity*.

And as these Things plainly shew that the Kingdom of the *Messiah* spoken of by the Prophets was not merely of a secular Nature, like the Kingdoms of this World, and that the principal Benefits of it, and in which the Glory of it is described as principally consisting, are spiritual and divine; so it is also evident, that these Benefits and this Salvation are represented there as not confined to the *Jews* only, but extending to all Mankind. Thus in the Promise made to *Abraham*, and which is so often referred to in the New Testament, it is said, that in his Seed should all the Families of the Earth be blessed. When *Jacob* prophesies of the *Messiah*

under the Name of *Shiloh*, it is declared that unto him should the gathering of the People be, Gen. xlix. 10. It is foretold that in the Time of that Branch that should grow out of the Root of Jesse, the Earth should be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea; and that to him should the Gentiles seek, or as the Seventy render it, in him shall the Gentiles trust, Isa. xi. 1, 9, 10. That God would put his Spirit upon him, and he should bring forth Judgment unto the Gentiles, and the Isles should wait for his Law; and that God would give him for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the Gentiles, Isa. xlii. 1, 4, 6. And again, that God would give him for a Light to the Gentiles, that he might be the Salvation of God, unto the Ends of the Earth, Isa. xlix. 6. He is described under the Character of the Desire of all Nations, Hag. ii. 6—9. to shew that he was promised and designed to be a Blessing to all Nations. The general Conversion of the Gentiles to the Knowledge of God and true Religion is frequently signified by the Prophets in strong and noble, tho' figurative Expressions, see Mal. i. 11. Isa. ii. 2, 3. Some of those Expressions do indeed carry a manifest Allusion to the Manner of Worship that was in use under the legal Dispensation, see Isa. lxvi. 23. Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18. but the general Design of those Expressions is no more than to signify that the Gentiles should be brought into the true Church of God, and should become his People, and worship him in a pure and acceptable Manner, according to his Appointment; but not that the *Mosaick* Law and the Rites there prescribed should be observed by the Gentiles: the contrary to which plainly appears from some of those Passages. Thus, Mal. i. 11 the Conversion of the Gentiles is represented by their offering Incense unto the Lord, and a pure Offering in every Place: but that this cannot be understood literally of their offering Incense and Oblations ac-

According to the Law is evident, because that Law did not allow Incense to be offered in any Place but at the Temple or Tabernacle. So it is foretold, *Isa. xix. 9—21.* that the *Egyptians should know the Lord*; and that they should offer *Sacrifice and Oblation*; and that an *Altar* should be erected unto the Lord, in the *Midst of the Land of Egypt*, and a *Pillar at the Border thereof to the Lord*. Where it is manifest that these Expressions are not to be taken literally as signifying the Manner in which they should worship God; for both these, the erecting Pillars to God any where at all, and the erecting Altars in any Place but in the Land of *Canaan*, at the Place which the Lord should choose there, are forbidden in that Law. In that Prophecy it is also farther declared, that *Egypt* and *Assyria*, by which are signified the chief of the Heathen Nations, should as well as *Israel* be God's *People* and *Inheritance*. Whereby it is plainly signified that the Distinction of Nations should then be taken away; there should be no Difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and the peculiar Rites of the Mosaick Constitution should be abolished, see *Isa. xix. 24, 25.* With a View to this State of Things, all Nations are often called upon to praise the Lord for his Mercy and Truth, and to serve him with Gladness; it is signified that there was a Time coming when his Way should be known upon Earth, and his saving Health unto all Nations; when all the Earth should worship him, and should sing unto his Name, and a glorious Reign of God is spoken of that should be the just Cause of universal Joy and Rejoicing to all People*.

In a Word, nothing can be more evident than it is from the Prophecies that the Kingdom of the *Messiah* is represented as an *universal* Benefit, the happy Effects of which were not to be confined to

* See *Psal. lxi. 1—4. lxvii. 1—4. xcvi. xcvi. c. cxvii.*

the *Jews*, but were to extend unto all Nations. And tho' many of the *Jews* thro' their Selfishness and narrow Prejudices would fain have appropriated the Benefits of the *Messiah* to their own Nation; yet there was some among them that still preserved juster Notions of Things in Conformity to the plain Declarations of the antient Prophecies concerning him. Thus aged *Simeon*, who was one of those that *expected the Consolation of Israel*, that is, waited for the coming of the *Messiah*, when he took *Jesus* into his Arms, and blessed God for having caused him to live and see the promised *Messiah*, calls him *the Salvation of God which he had prepared before the Face of all People; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People Israel*, *Luke ii. 30, 31, 32.* And even the *Samaritans*, who had the same Hopes and Expectations of the *Messiah* with the *Jews*, looked for him under the Notion of the Saviour of the World: *We know, say they, that this is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the World*, *John iv. 42.*

From the several Passages that have been referred to, and others that might be mentioned, it appears that the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, and that glorious State of Things so much spoken of in the Prophecies, is not to be understood merely of a worldly Dominion or Empire, under the Government of a mere temporal Prince, that was to be a proper King of the *Jews*, and of them only, but of a Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace, of Truth and Holiness; the proper Design of which was to spread the Knowledge and Practice of true Religion among Men: that this *Messiah* to whom this Kingdom belonged was to be the great Prophet and Teacher of his Church, the great High Priest but not after the Order of *Aaron*, the Messenger of a new and most gracious Covenant different from that which God made with the *Israelites* when he brought them out of *Egypt*: That he was to ap-

pear in a mean and humble Form, and to endure the greatest Sufferings, and by those Sufferings to make Reconciliation for Iniquity: That he was to be cut off out of the Land of the Living, and in Consequence of this was to be highly exalted: That his Dominion was to be extensive over all Nations, and to continue to the End of the World: That the Blessings of his Reign were not to be confined to the *Jews* only, but were to extend unto all Nations; he was to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*; and the Salvation of God unto the Ends of the Earth; so that the whole World should have Reason to rejoice in his coming, and in the Dispensation he introduced, as an universal Blessing.

When therefore the King or *Messiah* of whom such glorious Things are spoken, is represented as *sitting on the Throne of David his Father*; it is evident this cannot be understood in the Sense this Author puts upon that Phrase, as if he were to be only a temporal Prince, and a national Deliverer and Saviour of the *Jews* only; which by no means answers the *Idea* the Prophets gave us of the *Messiah*. All that is intended in these Expressions is that as he was to proceed out of the Family and Race of *David*, so he was to be King as *David* was, but in a far more sublime and glorious Sense. *David's* being chosen and set apart by God's own special Designation and Appointment to be King over *Israel*, who were then God's peculiar People and Inheritance, whom he fed according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided by the Skillfulness of his Hands, *Psal. lxxviii. 70, 71, 72.* was a Type of that more glorious Kingdom and Sovereignty which the *Messiah* was to exercise over the universal Church. In that remarkable Prophecy relating to the *Messiah*, *Isa. ix. 6, 7.* after it is said, *unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The*

mighty God, *The everlasting Father*, or as the Seventy render it, *the Father of the World to come*, or the future Age, *The Prince of Peace* : It is added, *of the Increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no End ; upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth even for ever : the Zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.* From which Passage it is evident, that as the Person there spoken of is represented by Characters that shew him to be vastly superior to *David*, so the Kingdom ascribed to him, tho' figuratively signified by the Expressions of his sitting upon *David's Throne*, and upon his Kingdom, must needs be understood to be of a far higher and nobler Nature ; even that Kingdom so often represented by the Prophets as a Kingdom of Righteousness and Truth, Charity and Benevolence. That Kingdom of *the Son of Man* spoken of by *Daniel*, which is represented as of a different Kind from all former Dominions and Empires ; which are described under the Emblem of furious wild Beasts, destructive Powers ; whereas this is represented as an universal Blessing to Mankind.

If it be said, that granting all this to be true, yet still these Prophecies cannot be applied to our *Lord Jesus Christ*, since the Event hath not answered these glorious Predictions of universal Peace, Righteousness, &c. that are represented as attending the *Messiah's Kingdom*. I answer, that if it be considered that our *Lord Jesus Christ* hath brought in a new and most perfect Dispensation, the manifest Tendency of which is to establish Righteousness, Truth, Peace, and universal Charity and Good-will amongst Mankind, without Distinction between *Jews and Gentiles* : That in Consequence of his grievous Sufferings, which were expressly foretold, *God hath highly exalted him, and he was declared to be the Son of God with Power* : That

not with-

notwithstanding all the Opposition it met with, the Gospel of his Kingdom attended with the Holy Ghost, sent down from Heaven, and with the most glorious Manifestations of a divine Power, made a surprising Progress, and in a few Years was published throughout the vast *Roman Empire*; the Kingdom of *Satan* and pagan *Idolatry* fell down before it; and vast Numbers were every where turned from Darkness to Light, from worshipping Idols to serve the living and true God, and from Vice and Wickedness, and the most immoral Conduct to a Life of Holiness, Purity and Virtue. Any one that considers this, and at the same time considers the pompous Figures of the *prophetick* Style, will not be surpris'd that such a glorious Person, and such a Dispensation and State of Things should be foretold and set forth by lofty Figures, and in the most strong and elevated Expressions. And if Christians afterwards fell off from the Purity and Glory of the Gospel into a great and general *Apostacy*; tho' still in Times of the greatest Degeneracy there were many thousands among them that faithfully adhered to the true Worship, Love, and Obedience of the only true God thro' Jesus Christ, and to the Practice of real Piety and Righteousness; and if there has risen up an exorbitant *Anti-christian* Power and Spiritual Tyranny, which hath been of long Continuance; this also hath been plainly foretold, and that a very glorious State of Things shall follow, and shall continue for a long time. And under this glorious State of the Church, the propheticall Predictions relating to the *Messiah's* Kingdom, its universal Extent, Peace, Purity, Happiness, shall receive their fullest Accomplishment. And the remarkable Completion of the other Parts of the Prophecies leave us no reasonable Room to doubt that whatever remains to be fulfilled shall in the due Season be accomplished also.

And

And whereas the *Messiah's* Kingdom seems sometimes to be described with a particular Regard to the *Jews*; and it is foretold that he should reign over them as their *Prince* and *Shepherd*, and that in his Days *Israel* and *Judah* should dwell safely, and in a happy State: There are two Things that will entirely take off the Advantage our Author pretends to take from these Expressions. The one is, that the Terms *Israel* and *Judah* and the *House of Jacob*, are not always to be understood in the Prophets precisely of the Seed of *Jacob* literally so called, or of the *Jewish* People and Nation; but are sometimes designed to signify the *Church* in general, as it should be vastly enlarged under the Gospel Dispensation, when Jew and Gentile should be all one in Christ Jesus. It might be easily shewn that there is nothing in this but what is perfectly agreeable to the prophetic Style and Manner of Expression. And in Conformity to this Way of Speaking, the Church under the New Testament is described under the Character of the *Jerusalem* which is above, Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 23. True Christians are called *Jews*, Rev. iii. 9. *The Israel of God*, Gal. vi. 6. *The true Circumcision*, Phil. iii. 3. And all sincere Believers are called *Abraham's* Seed, and the *Children of Abraham*. The other Thing to be observed is, that if some of those Prophecies, that speak of the Advantages *Israel* and *Judah* were to enjoy under the *Messiah*, be understood literally of the People of the *Jews*, they relate to a future *Restoration* of the *Jews* that is yet to be accomplished. As the present wonderful Dispersion of the *Jews*, their being scattered through all Nations of the Earth, and their finding no Rest among them, but being every where hated and despised, scorned and reproached; and their still continuing in this their unexampled Dispersion to be a *distinct* People, is foretold and described by many remarkable Characters,

and

and which could never be applied to any other Nation*, so their *Recovery* and Return is also foretold. And this their Deliverance is sometimes expressly applied to the *latter Days*, and is connected with the Times of the *Messiah*. Not as if it were to happen immediately upon the *Messiah's* coming: On the contrary it is plainly signified, that the *Jews* would despise and reject him when he came, Isa. liii. 1, 2, 3. that he would be a *Stone of Stumbling* and a *Rock of Offence* to them, at which many should fall and be broken, Isa. viii. 14, 15. It is intimated that *Israel* should not be gathered at his coming, and yet he should be glorified, Isa. xlix. 5. that the *Day of his coming* would be great and terrible to many among them, Mal. iii. 1, 2. iv. 1, 5. And most plainly and expressly it is foretold by *Daniel*, that the coming of the *Messiah* would be attended with the Destruction of their City and Sanctuary, and the Subversion of their whole Constitution, Dan. ix. 26, 27. And finally, that after they had continued many Days, or for a long Time, without a King, and without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice, and without an Image, and without an Ephod, and without Teraphim: A most exact Description of their present State, when they are without any Form of Government, without the Exercise of the legal Priesthood or Oblations, and at the same Time free from that Idolatry to which they were antiently so prone; they should afterwards return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, that is, the true *Messiah*, who is sometimes represented under that Character, and should fear the Lord and his Goodness in the latter Days, Hof. iii. 4, 5. And that God would pour forth upon them a Spirit of Grace and Supplication, and that they should look upon him whom they had

* See Deut. xxviii. 63, 64. Amos ix. 8, 9, 11. Deut. xxx. 4. Jer. xxx. 11. xxiii. 31. If. xi. 11—16.

pierced and mourn, Zach. xii. 10—14. xiii. 1. And their State under the *Messiah* is described in figurative Expressions, as a State of Peace and Holiness, Ezek. xxxiv. 23—31. xxxvi. 21—28. This Return and Conversion of the *Jews*, and the happy Effects of it, St. Paul clearly speaks of in the eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*. And since the former Part of the Prophecies relating to the *Jews* is so remarkably accomplished, we may regard it as a Pledge and Assurance, that the other Part of the Prophecies, relating to their future Conversion and Return, shall also receive its proper Completion. And indeed their being still preserved a distinct People, in such remarkable Circumstances, seems to shew that they are reserved for some signal Purposes of divine Providence.

And now, upon this brief View of the Prophecies relating to the *Messiah*, which were delivered not all at once, but by different Persons, and in diverse Manners, at a vast Distance of Time from one another, and which are remarkably accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the several Characters given of the Messiah, tho' some of them at first View seemed not very consistent with others, do wonderfully concur; I think it must be acknowledged that such a Series of Prophecy carried on for a long Succession of Ages, yet all conspiring with an admirable Harmony, the like of which cannot be produced in any other Case, yields a glorious and peculiar Kind of Attestation to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Dispensation he hath introduced. And when joined with his wonderful *Miracles*, and the extraordinary *Effusion* of the Holy Ghost, and the excellent *Tendency* of that Doctrine and Religion which he taught and published to the World, lays a solid Foundation for our Faith in him, and Obedience to the Doctrines and Laws which he hath given us. Our Author indeed will not allow that the Prophecies

phesies furnish any Proof at all. He argues, that if the *Life or Religion of the Pope or Mahomet had been prophesied of and foretold, as some think they were*, this would have been no Proof of the Truth of *Doctrines or Righteousness of Persons*, and therefore could have been no rational Foundation for true Religion. p. 332, 333. And it will be easily owned, that if our Lord *Jesus Christ* had been prophesied of no otherwise than as a tyrannous wicked Power, no Man in his Senses would have produced this as a Proof that his Mission was divine; when it would rather have proved, that this was that very wicked oppressive Power that had been foretold and described, in order to warn People against it, and to keep them from being too much discouraged on the Account of it, as well as to strengthen their Hope that it should be at length destroyed. But when there had been a Person foretold from the Beginning of the World as a Blessing to Mankind, and the sending of whom is represented as the most extraordinary Effect of divine Love; when he had been described by the most glorious *divine Characters*, and many *particular Circumstances* relating to his Person, Actions, Offices, and the precise Time of his coming plainly pointed out; this being the Case, when he actually came in whom all these Characters met, and to whom all these Predictions pointed, and in whom alone they received their Accomplishment, this certainly tended highly to recommend him to the Esteem of Mankind, and to prepare and engage them to receive that Dispensation of Righteousness, Truth, and Charity, which he came to introduce and establish. It tended to remove the *Prejudices* arising from the Meanness of his outward Appearance, from his Sufferings, &c. since it was manifest from the Prophecies, that even these Things were expressly foretold concerning him; and made a Part of the divine Scheme. And it shewed the great Guilt

Guilt of rejecting him, and thereby counteracting the great and noble Design and Scheme of divine Providence, which had been carried on from the Beginning.

I add, that these Prophecies, and their Accomplishments, besides that they exhibit an illustrious Proof of a most wise presiding Providence that governs the whole Series of Events, and shew the Extent of the divine Knowledge, and thus are very serviceable even to natural Religion, do also shew the wonderful Harmony between the Old Testament and the New; that there is one and the same Spirit in both; the same uniform Design and Scheme still carrying on; and that *Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21. Our Author indeed makes little of all this. If the Reader will take his Word for it, these Things are *Minutenesses*, and even *minutia minutiarum*, as he expresses it. He puts the Case that the Prophets *had foretold the Birth, Life, Miracles, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ*, particularly and minutely, in all the Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, &c. and then he asks, *What could this have proved, but only that these Men had the certain Knowledge of Futurity in those Matters? And consequently, that these Events were necessary, as depending upon necessary Causes, which might be certainly foreknown and predicted?* p. 332. I shall not stay to expose the Absurdity of this Passage, which plainly implies a Denial of God's Prescience of future Contingencies, and seems to suppose a fatal Necessity in human Actions and Events. For if the Actions here referred to, and all the several Events foretold by the Prophets, *were necessary, and depending on necessary Causes*, we may equally suppose that all other Events, and the Actions of all Men, at all Times, are necessary, and owing to necessary Causes, since they have not greater Marks of

of Freedom than these had ; which would be an odd Supposition in one that on all Occasions discovers such a mighty Zeal against *Fatalism*, and sets up as a warm Advocate for Man's *Free-agency*. But not to insist upon this, I shall only observe that if the Prophet's foretelling these Things doth prove, as the Author owns, that they *had the certain Knowledge of Futurity in these Matters*, it proves they foresaw Things which it was impossible for any human Sagacity to foresee, and which could only be known to him whose Providence presides over all Events, and whose Views extend throughout all Ages. And consequently, it proves, that those Prophets were extraordinarily inspired with the Knowledge of those Things by God himself ; and we may be sure, that he would not have thus inspired them but for some valuable End. And in the present Case, their being inspired to foretel the coming of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, was with a View to keep up the *Expectation* of this glorious Redeemer that was to come, and the better to *prepare* the World for receiving him when he actually came ; and that by considering the Predictions that went before concerning him, it might appear that he was the extraordinary Person, the sending of whom was the Thing which the divine Providence had all along in View. This gives a great Solemnity to his divine Mission, and is of signal Use, in Conjunction with the other illustrious Attestations given from Heaven. And there having been such a Succession of Prophets raised up among the *Jews*, who shewed by their wonderful Predictions, that they had extraordinary Communications from God, and who all harmoniously concurred, both in confirming the Law of *Moses* that had been already given, and carrying the Views of the People to another and more glorious Dispensation that was to succeed it, connected the Old Testament and the New, and confirmed the divine Original of both.

C H A P. XIII.

The Author's Charge against the Apostles, examined. His Pretence that they themselves were far from claiming Infallibility, considered. It is shewn that they did profess to be under the unerring Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in publishing the Gospel of Jesus; and that they gave sufficient Proofs to convince the World of their divine Mission. The Attestations given to Christianity, and to the Doctrines taught by the Apostles, by the extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost, considered and vindicated, against our Author's Exceptions. His Pretence that those Gifts of the Holy Ghost might be used like natural Faculties and Talents, according to the Pleasure of the Persons who were endowed with them, either for the promoting Truth or Error; and that the false Teachers, as well as the true, had these extraordinary Gifts and Powers, and made Use of them in confirmation of their false Doctrines, examined at large.

HAVING examined our Author's Insinuations against the Lord Jesus Christ, let us now proceed to consider what he offers with a View to subvert the Authority of the Apostles, and to shew that they are not at all to be depended on, in the Account they give of the Religion of Jesus, of which they were the first authorised Teachers and Publishers to the World. He affirms that they themselves never so much as pretended to the infallible Guidance of the Holy Spirit; or if they had pretended to it, their great Differences among themselves about the most concerning Points of Revelation would have been an evident Demonstration to the contrary: That they preached quite different and

even

even *contrary* Gospels : They reported the Doctrine of Christ according to their own *Jewish* Prejudices, and made a wrong Representation of several Facts, ascribing to him Things which he never did, and Prophecies which he never uttered, and Doctrines which he never taught : That besides this, the *New Testament* was farther corrupted and interpolated afterwards by the Christian *Jews*, so that as it now stands, it is a strange Mixture of Religions, of *Christianity* and *Judaism*, tho' they are the most opposite Things in the World.

I shall first begin with the Attempt he makes against the Infallibility and divine *Inspiration* of the Apostles. He alledges that " There was no Pre-
" tence in those apostolical Times to any Spirit or
" Holy Ghost, that made Men either infallible or
" impeccable ; that set Men above the Possibility
" of erring or being deceived themselves as to
" the inward Judgment, or of deceiving others in
" the outward Sentence and Declaration of that
" Judgment. This was the wild and impudent
" Claim of the Church of *Rome* in after Ages,
" which the *Apostles* themselves, who really had
" the Holy Ghost, and the Power of working
" Miracles, never pretended to. And tho' this has
" been liberally granted them, and supposed of
" them by our Christian *Zealots* and System-Mon-
" gers, yet it is what they never claimed." p.
80, 81.

As to what he calls their being *impeccable* ; if he means by this an absolute Impossibility of ever sinning at all, or doing a wrong Thing in any single Instance, in the whole Course of their Lives, neither the *Apostles* themselves, nor any for them, ever did pretend to this. Nor is it at all necessary to suppose such an Impeccability as this in order to their being depended upon. It is sufficient if they were Persons of such Honesty and Integrity as to be incapable of contriving and carrying on a deli-

berate solemn *Imposture* in the Name of God, and of putting known *Falshoods* upon the World under the Pretence of a divine Revelation. This is all the Impeccability, if the Author is resolved to use this Word, that we are concerned to stand up for with regard to the *Apostles*, and surely this is no more than may well be supposed concerning many Persons that are not absolutely raised above all the Passions and Fraikies of human Nature, in its present imperfect State. And this the *Apostles* certainly claimed. They affirmed that they did *not follow cunningly devised Fables*; that what they *heard and saw*, and what their Hands had *handled of the Word of Life*, that they declared. That they knew that their *Record was true*, and called God to witness to it. They declared with a noble Confidence, arising from an inward Consciousness of their own Integrity, that their *Rejoicing was this, the Testimony of their Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not in fleshly Wisdom but by the Grace of God, they had their Conversation in the World*. That they did *not corrupt the Word of God, nor handle it deceitfully, or walk in Craftiness*, but had renounced the *bidden Things of Dishonesty*; and as of *Sincerity, as of God, and in the Sight of God spoke they in Christ*. And could appeal to those that beheld their Conversation, and to God also, *how boldly and unblameably they behaved themselves*. And this Author himself seems to grant, that it is *probable that Men so qualified and acting, as the Apostles are supposed to have done, could have no Design to deceive us*. p. 93.

As to *Infallibility*, it is true that in the Sense in which this Author seems to understand it, as signifying that absolute Infallibility which he tells us is the sole Prerogative of God himself, or of an omniscient Being, see p. 9. and p. 83. viz. an utter Impossibility of ever erring, or being mistaken at any Time, or in any Thing whatsoever, 'tis cer-

tain the *Apostles* never pretended to it: For they never pretended to be *Gods*, or to be omniscient. Nor have any of those whom this Writer contemptuously calls *System-Mongers* ever ascribed it to them. But if by *Infallibility* is meant no more than their being under an *unerring* Guidance of the Holy Spirit, so as to be kept from Error or Mistake in teaching and delivering the Doctrines and Laws of Christ, 'tis certain they did pretend to this. They declared that Christ had expressly promised his Spirit to *teach them all Things* concerning him, and to *bring all Things to their Remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them*. John xiv. 26. And had assured them that when the Spirit of Truth came, whom he would send unto them from the Father, he would guide them into all Truth. For he should receive of his, and should shew it unto them, John xvi. 12, 13, 14. It is evident therefore that if this Promise of our Saviour was accomplished, and it is certain that they themselves believed and professed that this Promise was fulfilled to them, they were guided by the Spirit of Truth in the whole of the Gospel-Doctrine; and accordingly they claimed a Regard to the Word they preached, as the Word of God and not of Men, and urged the Disciples to be mindful of the Commandments of them the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour; 2 Pet. iii. 2. 1 Thess. ii. 13. The Apostle Paul, who was not one of those that attended Christ during the Course of his personal Ministry, but was afterwards taken into the Number of the Apostles, by the immediate Call of Christ himself, doth also in the strongest Manner lay Claim to this divine Guidance and Inspiration. He usually begins his Epistles with declaring that he was an Apostle of Jesus Christ, in order to challenge a Regard to the Instructions he gave, and the Doctrines he taught. He affirms, that the Things which he preached unto others God had revealed

unto him by his Spirit, that Spirit which searcheth all Things, yea the deep Things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 6, 10, 12. that he had or knew the Mind of Christ, ver. 16. that the Things which he writ were the Commandments of the Lord, 1 Cor. xiv. 37. He talks of Christ's speaking in him, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. He could not more strongly assert his own divine Inspiration, and the Certainty and divine Authority of the Doctrines he had preached, than by declaring, *tho' an Angel from Heaven should preach any other Gospel than that which he had preached, let him be accursed*, Gal. i. 8, 9. And again, *Ver. 11, 12. I certify you, Brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after Man. For I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ*. And he plainly supposes and asserts the divine Inspiration of the other Apostles too, and their entire Harmony in the Doctrines they preached in the Name of Christ, when he represents Christians as *built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone*. Eph. ii. 20. And declares that *the Mystery of God was revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit*. Eph. iii. 5.

It is plain then that the Apostles did profess to be infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit in the Doctrines they taught, and the Laws they delivered in the Name of Christ. If it be asked, which this Writer seems to say is the proper Question in this Case, whether they were not mistaken themselves, or what Proof they gave to the contrary. See p. 93, 94. I answer; That they were not mistaken in imagining themselves inspired by the Holy Ghost is manifest from the extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost conferred upon them, and discovering themselves by the most wonderful Effects; whereby it plainly appeared, that the Promise Christ had made to them of sending his Spirit

to guide them into all Truth, and to endue them with Power from on high, that they might be his Witnesses unto the uttermost Part of the Earth, Acts i. 8. was fully accomplished. The evident Design of all these wonderful Gifts and Powers, which shewed they were under an extraordinary Influence, and had an extraordinary Assistance, and of all the Miracles they wrought, was to confirm the Word they preached, and to engage Mankind to receive what they taught as the authorized Ministers and Witnesses of Jesus Christ, commissioned and sent by him to teach all Nations in his Name, and for that Purpose furnished with those extraordinary Gifts and Powers, both to enable and qualify them for the right Discharge of their Work, and to be the Proofs and Credentials of their Mission. Accordingly the Apostles all along appealed to these extraordinary Gifts and miraculous Powers, as the great confirming Evidence of the divine Authority of the Doctrines they taught, and the Laws they delivered in the Name of Christ. This is what the Apostle Peter insisted upon in his first Discourse to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 32, 33, 36. And what he and the other Apostles appealed to before the Jewish Council, Acts v. 32. The Apostle Paul often refers to those extraordinary Gifts and miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghost, as a glorious Confirmation of the Gospel which he preached. *His preaching* and that of the other Apostles *was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*: The Demonstration they gave of the Truth of what they delivered was the *Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*; a Demonstration of a peculiar Kind, but strong and powerful and convincing. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. *They preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven*, 1 Pet.

Rom. i. 11. xv. 18, 19. 1 Cor. i. 6, 7. 1 Thess. i. 5. Gal. iii. 2, 5.

i. 12. *God bearing them Witness with Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his Will, Heb. ii. 2, 3, 4.*

But tho' such a mighty Stress is laid upon this in the New Testament, as the great confirming Evidence of the Christian Religion, this Writer would have it all pass for nothing. It yields no more Evidence to it, than if there had been no such extraordinary Powers given at all. This is very strange. Let us consider the Reasons he gives for it. It is because "the extraordinary Powers and
 " Gifts in the apostolick Age were never confined
 " or annexed to any *moral* Character, but the false
 " Prophets and Teachers had them as well as the
 " true; and because those extraordinary Gifts and
 " Powers did not make Men either infallible or
 " impeccable, as they did not destroy natural Li-
 " berty or Free-agency, but they who were endued
 " with them might make either a good or bad
 " Use of them, as much as of any natural Facul-
 " ties or Talents. See Pref. p. 9. And again he
 " observes, that they who in the apostolical Times
 " had those extraordinary Gifts and Powers, were
 " left at Liberty to exercise them upon the com-
 " mon Principles of Reason and human Prudence.
 " And from hence we find that some made a right
 " Use of them for Edification; and others em-
 " ployed them only to serve the Purposes of Emu-
 " lation and Strife, which introduced great Confu-
 " sions and Disorders among them. And this is
 " an evident Proof that the Persons vested with
 " such extraordinary Gifts and Powers were nei-
 " ther infallible nor impeccable, that is, they were
 " not hereby made incapable either of deceiving
 " others, or of being deceived themselves. And
 " then he repeats what he had observed before,
 " that false Prophets, and the most wicked Sedu-
 " cers might and did work Miracles, which
 " they could not have done, had Miracles been
 " any Evidence or Proof of Truth and sound Doc-
 " trine," p. 80, 81.

As

As the main Foundation of all he here offers lyes in supposing it as a Thing not to be contested, that all those extraordinary Gifts or Powers, when once given, were as much in Men's own Power as any of their *natural* Faculties or Talents, and might be equally made use of to promote and propagate Truth and Falshood, I shall distinctly examine this Supposition with regard to the principal of those extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that were poured forth in the apostolical Age.

The only extraordinary Gift concerning which there is any just Pretence of making that Supposition is that of *Tongues*, Those that had this Gift probably had as much Command of that Language or Languages which they had once communicated to them by the immediate Operation of the Holy Ghost, as any Man hath of any Language that he hath learned or acquired; in the common Way. It seems to have been in the Nature of a *permanent Habit* to be used according to their Discretion, and accordingly some in the Church of *Corinth* used it unseasonably, and are reprov'd for it by the Apostle *Paul*, who gives Directions for a proper and seasonable Use of it to Edification. But then it must be considered that it was only the first *conferring* of the Gift of Tongues on any Person or Persons that was properly miraculous; the consequent Use of it was not so, and was not immediately and properly designed so much to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine they delivered, as to *enable* them to communicate that Doctrine to others, which was confirmed by other Miracles. The Gift of Tongues conferred upon the Apostles on the Day of *Pentecost* was signally *miraculous*. That plain simple unlearned Persons should be enabled at once without any previous Instruction to speak with divers Kinds of Tongues which they had never known before, and which Tongues they continued to use always afterwards: This was evi-

dently supernatural. No Force or Power of a Man's own *enthusiastick* Imagination could ever produce such an Effect. For who will pretend to say, that a Man can speak any Language that he pleases by only strongly imagining that he can speak it, tho' he never heard it before? And as the Force of a Man's own Imagination could never effect this, so neither could the Power or Skill of any other Man, or of all the Men upon Earth, enable him in a Moment, without Preparation, or previous Instruction to understand and speak several Languages, to which he was before an entire Stranger. Such an immediate and wonderful Operation upon the human Mind, in impressing so many thousand new *Ideas* at once upon it, is evidently supernatural, and seems peculiar to the Author of our Beings, whose Inspiration hath given us Understanding. This therefore was a most illustrious *confirming* Evidence of the Truth of Christ's divine Mission, in whose Name it was conferred; and was a Proof of the Accomplishment of the Promise he had made to his Apostles that he would send his Spirit upon them; and of the Truth of the divine Commission he gave them, to go teach all Nations, for which Work they were hereby signally qualified. But their *using* any of those Languages afterwards in the Nations to which they were sent could not be alone a Proof or Miracle to those Nations, because they did not know but they might have learned those Languages in the ordinary Way. But the proper Use of those Languages was to enable them to preach the Doctrine of *Jesus* to those Nations to whom they were sent, and by the other Miracles they wrought they *confirmed the Word with Signs following*. In like Manner, when any particular Person or Persons on their being baptized into the Faith of *Jesus Christ*, and laying on of the Apostle's Hands, which was the ordinary way by which the Gifts of the Holy Ghost were communicated, received

received the Gift of Tongues, it was at that time a most illustrious *Miracle*, and both to themselves who received this Gift, and to others who observed it; and knew they could not speak those Languages before, it was a glorious *Confirmation* of the Doctrine of *Jesus* taught by the Apostles, into which they were baptized. And if we should suppose a Person that had thus received the Gift of Tongues afterwards to *apostatise* from the Doctrine of the Apostles in which he had been instructed, and to become a false Teacher; his making an ill use of that Gift, supposing it to continue with him *, would not render it the less certain, that in its original Donation, it was a glorious Attestation to the Truth of Christianity, and of the apostolical Doctrine in Confirmation of which it was given. And instead of being an Argument in favour of such Seducers as should abuse the Gift contrary to the Doctrine they had received, it might be improved against them, to shew that the Doctrine from which they had swerved was true. It might be urged against them, that they themselves had received that Gift they boasted of only in the Name of *Jesus Christ*, and upon their believing and embracing the Doctrine of the *Apostles*; and that still none could receive those Gifts in any other way: and they might be challenged to communicate that Gift to others by the laying on of their Hands in Confirmation of their new Scheme of Doctrine, as it had been communicated to them in Confirmation of the Apostolick Doctrine which they had received along with that Gift, and in which therefore they ought to have continued.

I have been the more particular in considering the Gift of *Tongues*, because if the Supposition the

* I am willing to make this Concession, tho' the Instances of the Abuse of the Gift of Tongues mentioned by the Apostle *Paul*, 1 Cor. xiv. do not at all relate to the abusing it for propagating false Doctrine, but to an using it *unseasonably*, and with Offentation, and not in so orderly and edifying a manner as they ought to have done.

Author makes concerning the extraordinary Gifts in the apostolick Age, that Men might make a good or bad Use of them as much as of any of their natural Faculties and Talents, if this Supposition holds good concerning any of those Gifts, it must be the Gift of Tongues; and yet even in this Instance it will by no means answer the End he proposes by it, which is to shew that this Gift could yield no *Attestation* at all to the Truth of Christianity.

The *Word of Wisdom*, and the *Word of Knowledge*, are mentioned by the Apostle Paul, among the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. And as it is probable that the Persons that had those Gifts, had their Minds extraordinarily enlightned in the Knowledge of spiritual and divine Things, and the great important Doctrines and Mysteries of the Gospel; so it may well be supposed that that Knowledge once communicated to the Mind by the Illumination of the Spirit continued there in the Nature of a *permanent* Light and Habit; and those that had this Knowledge might communicate it to others by Speaking or Writing as other Knowledge is communicated. But it cannot be pretended that this Gift was one of those that were capable of being abused to propagate Error and Falshood. It is a Contradiction to suppose that any Person should by the Exercise of this Gift of divine *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, that is, by the very actual Exercise of the Knowledge of Truth, and by declaring and imparting to others the Knowledge he himself had of the Truth, promote and propagate false Doctrine and Error.

The same Observation holds with regard to the Gift of *Prophefying*, taken in the Sense in which the Apostle seems to understand it, 1 Cor. xiv. for an extraordinary Gift of *teaching* and *exhorting* in the publick Assemblies for Edification and Instruction in Doctrine and Practice. It is probable there was an

abiding Habit or Ability this way communicated to those Persons that had this Gift, by Virtue of which they were qualified and enabled to teach and exhort the People. Besides which it may be concluded from the Account the Apostles give us, that these Persons were often under an immediate afflatus of the Holy Ghost in the actual Exercise of that Gift in the publick Assemblies; tho' it did not hurry them on by an irresistible Impulse, but left Room for a prudential Management. They had it in their Power to exercise it in such a Way and Manner as might be most for *Edification*, and most agreeable to *Decency* and *Order*. But if they exercised this Gift at all, if they either taught and exhorted by virtue of the habitual Knowledge and Wisdom, which was at first communicated to them by the Holy Ghost, and according to the Ability then given them, or according to the immediate Afflatus and actual Inspiration communicated to them occasionally afterwards; this Gift in either Case, if really used at all, was only capable of serving the Cause of Truth. If a Man, pretending to the Gift of Prophecy, taught Errors and false Doctrines, it could not be by the real Exercise of the Gift of Prophecy which he received from the Holy Ghost, but by falsely pretending to it when he had it not. In which Case it could not be said, that it was owing to his making an ill Use of the Gift which he really had, as Persons may make an ill Use of their natural Faculties and Talents which they have, which is the Author's Supposition; but only that he *pretended* to that extraordinary Gift when he really had it not. And against such false Pretenders also the divine Wisdom and Goodness had provided a Remedy by another Gift of an extraordinary Nature, which was communicated in that first Age of Christianity, *viz.* that of *discerning of Spirits*, whereby Persons were enabled to discern between false Teachers and the true, and
between

between falsely pretended Inspirations, and true Inspirations of the Holy Ghost. And any Man that had this Gift conferred upon him, if he really exercised it at all, must exercise it in *Detecting* Falshood, and false Teachers, because this was essentially included in the very Nature of it.

Another Gift or Power which attended the first Preachers of Christianity, and which was more peculiarly intended for a Confirmation of the Doctrines they delivered, was the Power of working *Miracles*; that is, doing wonderful Works far transcending all human Power, of which we have several remarkable Instances recorded in the *Acts* of the Apostles. But this was not properly a permanent constant Habit to be exercised like natural Faculties and Talents, as this Writer supposes, merely according to the Pleasure or Choice of the Person by whom those Miracles were wrought. They could only do those Miracles when and upon what Occasions it seemed fit to the Holy Ghost that they should do them: in which Case they felt an extraordinary Impulse, which is usually called the *Faith of Miracles*, which was a Kind of Direction to them when to work those Miracles, and whereby they knew and were persuaded that God would enable them to do them. Thus, e. g. it was not in the Power of those that had the Gift of *healing*, nor even of the *Apostles* themselves, who had those Gifts in a far greater Measure and Degree than any others, to heal the Sick as often as, and whensoever they pleased. For then they would scarce have suffered any of their own intimate Friends to have died. But it was when God saw it fit that this Gift should be exercised; which was usually ordered then when it served best to the Propagation and Confirmation of the Gospel. So *Paul* left *Trophimus* at *Miletum* sick, whom no doubt he would gladly have healed and restored at once, if it had been left merely to his own Choice, to have exercised

exercised his Gift of healing as he pleased. And he speaks of *Epaphroditus's* Sickness in such a manner as shews that it did not depend upon him to recover him when he would, *Phil. ii. 27.* And yet we find at another time, the same Apostle, when he was at *Ephesus* preaching the Word of the Lord *Jesus* to those that dwelt in *Asia*, both *Jews* and *Greeks*, and when the *Jews* contradicted and opposed his Doctrine, wrought the most astonishing Miracles in Confirmation of it. We are told, that at that Time, and for such valuable Ends, God ordered it so, that *St. Paul* fully exercised his miraculous Powers. The sacred Historian observes, that God wrought special Miracles by the Hands of *Paul*. The Manner of Expression is remarkable, and shews that the Miracles were God's own Work, only done by *St. Paul* as the Instrument, so that from his Body were brought unto the Sick Handkerchiefs, or Aprons, and the Diseases departed from them, and the evil Spirits went out of them, *Acts xix. 11, 12.* Sometimes the Apostles raised the Dead: as *Peter* raised *Tabitha* or *Dorcas*, and *Paul* raised *Eutychus*. But it cannot be supposed, that they could exercise that Power as often as they themselves pleased, and that it depended merely on their own Will and Choice; but it was exercised upon extraordinary Occasions, when it seemed fit to the divine Wisdom that it should be so, who in that case directed them to it by a special Impulse upon their Minds.

Thus also with regard to the Gift of *Prophecy*, if it be taken in the strictest Sense, for foretelling Things to come, which was one Thing promised by our Saviour to his Apostles, *John xvi. 13.* and of which we have an Instance in *Agabus* who is called a Prophet, *Acts xi. 28, xxi. 10.* this was not like natural Faculties, or acquired Abilities to be exercised at their own Pleasure. It did not depend merely upon their own Will and Choice, when they

they were to foretel Things to come, or what future Things they were to foretel. This depended wholly on the *Will* of the Holy Ghost by whom they were inspired. And they could then only exercise this Gift, when it seemed fit to God for wise Purposes that they should exercise it. The same may be said of the extraordinary Power they had in some Instances of *discerning* the Secrets of the Heart, and the Workings of Men's Spirits, and what passed inwardly in their Minds, see *Acts* v. 3, 4. *xiv.* 9. *1 Cor.* *xiv.* 25.

With regard to these and other extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost, it is evident, that they were not, as this Writer supposes, left merely to Men's own Direction and Management, to be employed to whatever Purposes they thought fit, whether good or bad, like their natural Faculties and Talents. But they were empowered to exercise those Gifts, whenever it seemed fit to God they should exercise them for some valuable Ends, for doing Good, or for the Confirmation of the Gospel *. If therefore we should suppose that

some

* Concerning these extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost poured forth in the first Age of Christianity, I would observe, 1. That they were very *various*, both in their Kind and Degree, and were distributed, not according to the Will of Man, but with great Variety in such Proportions, and to such Persons, as to the Holy Ghost seemed meet, who as the Apostle tells us, *distributed to every Man severally according to his Will* *1 Cor.* *xiii.* 11. And it seems to appear from the Account he gives us, that the same Person was not usually Partaker of several of these extraordinary Gifts together, but some of these Gifts were given to one, and some to another, see *1 Cor.* *xii.* 8, 9, 10. *Rom.* *xii.* 6, 7, 8. except where Persons were designed for very eminent Service in the Church; especially the Apostles, who had all these Gifts in Conjunction. 2. The general Design for which they were all given was not for Ostentation, but for Edification and Use. The *Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*, that is, to render him useful to others, *1 Cor.* *xii.* 7. Hence the Gift of Tongues was usually joined with that of *Prophecy*, that the one might render the other

some who had once received some of the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, should afterwards apostatise from the true Doctrine of the Gospel which they had received, and should prove bad Men and wicked Seducers, it would not follow, that because they had those Gifts once, and when they preached the Truth, exercised them in Confirmation of it, therefore it was in their Power to exercise those Gifts and miraculous Powers afterwards in Confirmation of Error and Falshood. For since the Exercise of those Powers, particularly that of working Miracles, depended not merely on themselves, and on their own Pleasure, but on the peculiar Impulse and Operation of the Spirit; then on Supposition that they intended to work a Miracle for the Confirmation of any Doctrine opposite to Christianity, we may be sure that the Spirit would not give them his Assistance to confirm a Falshood. Nor can this Writer prove what he confidently asserts and takes for granted, that any false Teachers in that Age did by Virtue of any extraordinary

other more useful, *Acts* ii. 11. x. 46. xix. 6. 3. All these Operations are ascribed to God. *There are diversities of Operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all,* 1 *Cor.* xii. 6. 4. As the communicating those Gifts at first, so the continuing of them to those Persons that had received them, depended on the wise and good Pleasure of God. So that it doth not follow that when Men once had those extraordinary Powers, they were always to have them, let them use them to what Purposes they would. It was still in the Power of him that gave them to continue or increase them, or to withdraw them from those that should endeavour to abuse them to the Subversion of the Gospel they were designed to promote. And several Passages of Scripture plainly intimate that the Spirit in his extraordinary Gifts as well as in his more ordinary gracious Operations, might be quenched and provoked to withdraw: and on the other Hand, that Persons by making a right Use of those Gifts they had, and applying to God by Prayer with Faith and Humility, might obtain farther Degrees of them, and excel in them more and more. See 1 *Cor.* xii. 31. xiv. 1. 1 *Thess.* v. 19. 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. 2 *Tim.* i. 6. v. regno

Gifts

Gifts or Powers of the Holy Ghost communicated to them, *work Miracles* to confirm the false Doctrines they preached. Our Saviour indeed makes a Supposition, *Matt. vii. 21, 22, 23.* of Persons *professing and doing many wonderful Works in his Name*, who yet should be rejected by him at the last Day as evil Doers. But this is a very different Case from that which the Author puts. For our Saviour doth not there speak of *false Teachers* working Miracles in Confirmation of a Falshood, but of Persons that preached the true Doctrine of Christ, and wrought Miracles in Confirmation of it, and were ready to plead this as a Kind of Merit, as if it was sufficient to entitle them to Heaven, tho' they did not apply themselves to the *Practice* of real Godliness and Virtue. This is the Case our Saviour supposes, and it furnisheth us with this important Lesson, that no external Privileges or Attainments, how splendid soever, and no Knowledge of the Doctrine of the Gospel, tho' accompanied with the most extraordinary Gifts, will recommend a Man to the Favour of God, or entitle him to that future Blessedness, without real Holiness of Heart and Life. And it is a Supposition that may be made, that Persons might have their Minds extraordinarily enlightened in the Knowledge of Christianity, and be inwardly convinced of the Truth of the Doctrine of *Jesus*, and preach that Truth to others, and yet thro' the Prevalency of some corrupt Appetite, it might not have its proper sanctifying Influence upon their own Hearts and Lives. In which Case their being enabled to work Miracles in Confirmation of the Doctrine they taught, might be a *Proof* to others of the Truth of that Doctrine, tho' it was not a *Security* to themselves concerning their own Salvation, which depended entirely upon their own personal Obedience and Holiness.

With regard to the *false Apostles* and *judaising Teachers* who opposed St. Paul, and taught the ab-

solute Necessity of Circumcision, and the Observation of the Mosaical Rites in order to Men's being justified and saved; it cannot be proved that any of them wrought Miracles in Confirmation of that Doctrine. The contrary seems plain from that Question the Apostle proposeth to the *Galatians*. *Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the bearing of Faith? He that ministreth the Spirit to you, and worketh Miracles amongst you, doth he it by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* Gal. iii. 2, 5. Would he have said this, if Miracles had been wrought, and the Gifts of the Spirit communicated in Confirmation of the Doctrine he was opposing? He appeals to themselves as in a Matter of Fact that could not be contested, that Miracles were only wrought, and the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit communicated in Attestation of that true Doctrine of the Gospel which he had preached, and not of that *other Gospel*, as he calleth it, which the false Teachers would have imposed upon them. And accordingly in all the Accounts that are given in the New Testament, and particularly in the Writings of the Apostle *Paul*, concerning the false Teachers and Seducers in the apostolical Age, it is never so much as once intimated, that they exercised the extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost, particularly that of working Miracles in Confirmation of their Scheme of Error and false Doctrine. He represents them as Persons of great Cunning, *who by good Words, and fair Speeches deceived the Hearts of the Simple*, Rom. xvi. 8: As great Pretenders to *Excellency of Speech and Wisdom*, and making an Ostentation of Learning and Philosophy, in Opposition to whom he declareth concerning himself, that his *Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*, that is, it was accompanied with the Power of the Holy Ghost, which theirs was not. 1 Cor.

xi. 1, 4, 5. see also 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. He represents his Opposers as *commending themselves*, but himself as one whom *the Lord commended*: that is, by his Gifts and Graces vouchsafed to him, and the Power attending on his Ministry. They *gloried after the Flesh*, they boasted that they were *Hebrews*, and called themselves *Apostles*, &c. 2 Cor. xi. 18, 22, 23. *Pbil.* iii. 4, 5, 6: But as to himself he declares, that *truly the Signs of an Apostle were wrought by him in all Patience, in Signs, and Wonders, and mighty Deeds*, 2 Cor. xii. 12. So elsewhere he represents those false Teachers as endeavouring to *beguile Men with enticing Words*, and to *spoil them thro' Philosophy and vain Deceit, thro' the Traditions of Men*; and making a *shew of Wisdom, in Will Worship, and Humility*, Col. ii. 4, 8, 18, 23. And in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, where he particularly describes them, they are represented as *giving heed to Jewish Fables*, and *given to vain Babblings and Oppositions of Science falsely so called*. But there is not one Word in all that he saith concerning them of their working Miracles, or abusing the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost to confirm their false Doctrines. The same Observation may be made on the Account the Apostle *Peter* gives of the false Teachers mentioned in his *second Epistle*, whom he represents as *thro' Covetousness with feigned Words, making Merchandise of Men, and speaking great swelling Words of Vanity*; and *alluring Men thro' the Lusts of the Flesh, and thro' much Wantonness, and by promising them Liberty*. And *Jude* gives pretty much the same Description of them: and among other Characters represents them as *sensual, having not the Spirit*, ver. 19. *i. e.* they were destitute of the Holy Spirit of God both in his Graces, and in his extraordinary Gifts. This Author therefore has no Reason for asserting with so much Confidence as he does, that *the false Prophets and Teachers had the extraordinary*

nary Gifts and Powers of the Holy Ghost in the apostolick Age as well as the true, Pref. p. 9. which he there lays down as a Principle capable of being maintained against all Opposers.

I think the Observations that have been made, destroy the Force of all that he advances to shew that no Argument can be brought to establish the Truth and divine Authority of the Gospel Revelation from the extraordinary Gifts and miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghost in the Apostolick Age. Those Gifts and Powers were evidently supernatural, above all the Art or Power of any Man, or of all the Men upon Earth, and shewed a very extraordinary Interposition. And as it was only in the Name of a crucified and risen Jesus, and upon their professing their Faith in him, and becoming his Disciples, that any received those Gifts and Powers, so the imparting those Gifts of the Holy Ghost as thus circumstanced, was an illustrious Confirmation of the Christian Faith and Doctrine published to the World by the Apostles of our Lord. For it must be considered that it was by the *laying on of the Hands* of the Apostles, that the Holy Ghost was ordinarily communicated. See *Acts* viii. 14—18. xix. 6. *Rom.* i. 11. and where it was given immediately from Heaven without the laying on of the Apostle's Hands, as in the Case of *Corneilius*, and those that werewith him, *Acts* x. 44. yet still it was in Confirmation of the Doctrine taught by the Apostles. As they were properly speaking immediately commissioned by Christ himself to be the authorized Publishers of his Doctrines and Laws to the World, so they were eminently distinguished above all other Teachers in that Age, and had an Authority which no other Teachers had; and that not only because they had those extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit of which others also were made Partakers, in a far greater Abundance, and in a more excellent Measure and De-

gree. See 1 Cor. xiv. 18. 2 Cor. xii. 12 : But they were invested with some extraordinary Powers of a peculiar Kind which no other Persons had, and which were especially designed to confirm their divine Mission and Authority, and to engage Men to pay an entire Submission and Regard to what they delivered in the Name of *Christ*. Such was the Power already mentioned of *communicating* the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary Gifts by the laying on of their Hands. What could have a greater Tendency to convince the World that God had sent them, and that the Doctrine which they published in the Name of *Christ* was true and of divine Original, than this, that after having instructed Persons in the Christian Faith, they could by laying on of their Hands upon them in his Name, communicate some or other of those extraordinary Gifts and Powers in such Measures and Degrees as seemed fit to the Holy Ghost, who distributed them according to his Will, in Testimony of the Truth and Divinity of the Doctrine they had taught them. And a most illustrious Testimony it was, and which none of the *false* Apostles or Teachers of that Age ever did or ever could give in Confirmation of their Doctrines. We may also reckon among the extraordinary Powers peculiar to the Apostles, and which gave them a great Superiority above false Teachers, the Power of *inflicting bodily Punishments* in some extraordinary Cases, such was the striking *Elymas* the Sorcerer with blindness, *Acts* xiii. 8—12. And some such thing is probably intended by that *delivering unto Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus*, which the Apostle speaks of as a Power committed unto him by the *Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. see also 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. which seems to relate, as the Ancients explain it, to some *Pain*, or *Disease*, or grievous Correction inflicted on the Flesh or Body, by the Sharpness of which

which the guilty Person might be awakened to a Sense of his Sin, and brought to a true Repentance for it. And perhaps something of this Kind is what the Apostle means, when he threatens those amongst the *Corinthians* that had not repented of the great Sins they had committed, but still persisted in them, and in an Opposition to his Authority, that if he came again he *would not spare*; and speaks of his *using Sharpness according to the Power which the Lord had given him for Edification and not for Destruction*, and of his *having in a Readiness to revenge all Disobedience*, see 2 Cor. x. 6. xii. 20, 21. xiii. 2, 3, 10. Tho' he there intimates that he was loth to use this Power without necessity, and that he *could not do any Thing*, he could not use this Power he spoke of *against the Truth, but for the Truth*, ver. 7, 8. This Power like that of Miracles was not to be exercised by the Apostles whenever they themselves pleased, and merely to gratify their own private Passions, but was exercised by the extraordinary Impulse and Direction of the Holy Ghost, whenever it seemed fit to God that it should be exercised to his Glory, and for promoting the Interests of important Truth and real Religion and Godliness.

This also seems to have been the proper Design of that remarkable Judgment that was inflicted upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who both fell down dead by an immediate Stroke from Heaven at the Rebuke of the Apostle *Peter* for *lying to the Holy Ghost*. This was wisely ordered in the Beginning of the Gospel Dispensation, to procure a greater Regard to the Apostles who were mean in their outward Appearance. Their being thus enabled to know the Secrets of the Heart, and the signal Punishment that was inflicted on those that had formed a Design to impose upon them, was a remarkable Proof that they were indeed guided by *the Spirit that searcheth all Things*, and tended to give

a greater Weight to the Testimony they gave, and the Doctrine they taught in the Name of *Christ*. Thus it appears that as it was of great Importance to establish the Credit and Authority of the *Apostles* who were the principal appointed *Witnesses* of *Christ*, and the authorized *Publishers* of his Doctrine to the World, so it pleased God in his great Wisdom and Goodness to take care of this many ways. And to suppose that he would do all this, and interpose in so extraordinary a Manner, and by such wonderful Gifts and Powers to confirm their Authority, and to bear witness to the Doctrine and Religion they taught, and yet not guide and assist them in delivering that Doctrine and Religion, so as to preserve them from Error in teaching and publishing it to the World, is absurd, and too *inconsistent* a Conduct to be attributed to the wise and good God. Accordingly the Christians in general paid a peculiar Regard both in that first Age, and ever since, to the *Apostles* of our Lord; their continuing in the Christian Faith is expressed by their *continuing in the Apostles Doctrine*, Acts ii. 42 : And Believers are represented as *built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, Eph. ii. 20. And God hath so ordered it, that the Laws and Doctrines they delivered and published in the Name of *Christ*, and which were confirmed by such glorious Attestations were committed by themselves to Writing for the lasting Use and Instruction of the Church in succeeding Generations, under the Guidance and Inspiration of the same divine *Spirit of Truth*, that assisted them in publishing the Gospel, and enabled them to work such illustrious Miracles in Confirmation of it.

C H A P. XIV.

The Gospel taught by the Apostles was the same. The Author's Account of the Jewish Gospel, preached by them, false and groundless. The pretended Difference between St. Paul and the other Apostles, concerning the Obligation of the Law of Moses on the Jewish Converts, examined. None of the Apostles urged the Observation of that Law, as necessary to Justification and Acceptance with God, under the Gospel; tho' they all judged it lawful to observe the Mosaick Rites for a Season. The Wisdom and Consistency of this their Conduct, and the entire Harmony between St. Paul and the other Apostles in this Matter, shewn. The pretended Difference between them relating to the Law of Proselytism to be urged on the Gentile Converts. The Decree of the Apostolical Council at Jerusalem, considered; and the Reasons and Grounds of that Decree inquired into. No Proof that the Apostle Paul disapproved or counter-acted that Decree. The Conduct of that Apostle at his Trial, justified.

ANY one that impartially considers the New Testament will find one and the same uniform Scheme of Religion going thro' the Whole. It appears from the Writings of the Apostles, and the Account that is given us of their Preaching, that they all published the same Doctrines concerning the Attributes, Perfections and Providence of God, and the pure and spiritual Worship that is to be rendered to him, concerning the Methods of our Redemption and Reconciliation by *Jesus Christ*, concerning the Design and End of his coming into the World, and of his grievous Sufferings and Death, which they all represent as a Propitiation

for our Sins, concerning his Resurrection from the Dead, his Ascension and Exaltation at the Right Hand of God, his perpetual Mediation and Intercession, and his second Coming to raise the Dead, and to judge the World, and concerning the eternal Retributions that shall then be dispensed unto all Men according to their Behaviour in the Body. They all published the same pure and excellent Laws and Precepts, the same refined Morals, far exceeding, by the Author's own Confession, what any others have advanced, and the same noble and powerful Motives for ingaging Men to the Observation of these Precepts. They all taught the same gracious Terms of Acceptance, and made the same merciful Offers in the Name of God of Pardon, and Grace, and eternal Life upon Condition of Faith and Repentance, and new Obedience; and denounced the same awful Threatnings of eternal Misery and Ruin against those that should persist in obstinate Impenitency and Disobedience. These Things they all agreed in, the Apostle *Peter* as well as the Apostle *Paul*; the Gospel they all preached which they professed to have *received from the Lord Jesus*, and by the Inspiration of his Spirit, and which they *confirmed with Signs following*, was entirely the same, and perfectly harmonious and consistent in all its Parts. But this our moral Philosopher will not allow. He endeavours to shew that *they differed among themselves about the most concerning Points of Revelation*. And he thinks *this is an evident Demonstration that they were not infallible, insomuch that had they pretended to any such Thing, they must openly, and in the Face of the whole World have contradicted themselves in Fact*, p. 80, 81. And indeed in one Point there would be a very great and essential Difference between them if he could prove it, viz. that whereas the Apostle *Paul* preached *Jesus Christ* as the Saviour of the World both *Jews and Gentiles*; the other Apostles believed in

in him, and preached him only as a *temporal Messiah* and the Saviour of the *Jews* only.

After having observed, that the *Jewish* Populace or *Mobility* had generally a *Notion* of *Jesus* Christ as their *Messiah*, national Deliverer, or Restorer of the Kingdom, he expressly asserts, that his own Disciples had all along adhered to him upon this vain hope, and even after his Resurrection, they never preached *Jesus* as the *Messiah* or Christ in any other Sense, that is, in any other Sense than that of the *Jewish* Populace, as one that was to erect a temporal Kingdom, and was to be the national Deliverer of the *Jews*. He adds, that no Christian Jew ever believed in *Jesus* as the common Saviour of the World without Distinction between Jew and Gentile. This is St. Paul's Gospel which he had received, as he declared, by immediate Revelation from Christ himself; and had never advised or consulted with any of the *Jewish* Apostles about it, as well knowing that they would never come into it, see p. 350—354. see also p. 361. And after having asserted, that the *Jews* that adhered to *Jesus* as the *Messiah* after his Resurrection, all expected that he would soon come again, with a sufficient Power from Heaven to destroy the Roman Empire, to restore the Nation, and set up his Kingdom at Jerusalem; he adds, that this was properly the *Jewish* Gospel which Christ's own Disciples firmly adhered to and preached. And therefore he declares, that he takes this to have been the plain Truth of the Matter, that Christianity was nothing else but a political Faction among the *Jews*; some of them receiving *Jesus* as the *Messiah* or Restorer of the Kingdom, and others rejecting him under that Character, see p. 328. and p. 354. And again, p. 329. he tells us, that the Christian Jews received nothing new on their becoming Christians, but the single Article, that *Jesus* was the *Messiah* in the literal Sense of the Prophets, i. e. in their own national Sense. This was properly the whole of that Gospel, which according to him, Christ's

Christ's own Disciples that had been all along with him in his personal Ministry taught and published to the World.

If we were not a little used to this Writer's way of saying Things, we might be surprized at his asserting with so much Confidence a Thing which every one that can read the New Testament may easily know to be false; and it is scarce possible to suppose that he himself is so ignorant as not to be sensible that it is so. Not to enlarge upon Reflections which such a Conduct as this would justify, I shall produce a few out of many Passages that will clearly shew the Falshood of what he hath advanced. When St. Peter, whom our Author represents as at the Head of the *Christian Jews* in opposition to St. Paul, preached up Jesus as the *Messiah*, the Lord and Christ, immediately after our Lord's Ascension; and urged the *Jews* to believe in him; the Idea he gives of Christ as the Messiah is this, that God *had raised up his Son Jesus to bless them in turning them away from their Iniquities; and had exalted them to be a Prince and a Saviour, not a temporal Prince or national Deliverer, but to give Repentance unto Israel and Remission of Sins,* see *Acts* ii. 38. iii. 19, 26. v. 31. When he was sent to preach the Gospel to *Cornelius*, the Account he gives him of what God had commanded the Apostles to preach is this, *he commanded us to preach unto the People, and to testify that it is he [the Lord Jesus] which was ordained of God to be the Judge of Quick and Dead. To him give all the Prophets witness that thro' his Name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive Remission of Sins,* *Acts* x. 42, 43. Where it is evident that he represents the Benefits that were to be obtained thro' the *Messiah* as of a *spiritual Nature*; and declares, that this was the *Idea* the *Prophets* gave of the *Messiah* that was to be the Author of a *spiritual Salvation*. And in the *first Chapter* of his *first Epistle* he sets forth

in the most noble and admirable Expressions the Greatness of that Salvation that was to be obtained thro' *Jesus Christ*, as consisting not in a temporal national Deliverance of the *Jews* of which he gives not the least hint, but in an eternal heavenly Happiness, the Prospects of which filled the Minds of true Christians with a spiritual and divine Joy under the greatest present Afflictions and Sufferings: and he represents this *Salvation of their Souls as the End of their Faith*; and that this was the *Salvation of which the Prophets had spoken when they testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glories that should follow*, see 1 Pet. i. 2. ii. 25. v. 10. The same great Apostle before the whole Council of the Apostles and Elders, and Brethren at *Jerusalem*, declareth expressly, speaking of the *Gentiles*, *God which knoweth the Hearts bore them Witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us: and put no Difference between us and them, purifying their Hearts by Faith*, Acts xv. 8, 9. And he adds, ver. 21. *We believe that thro' the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they*. No Words can be more decisive to shew, that *Jesus Christ* was regarded as the Author of a spiritual Salvation; and that in this Salvation all true Believers were to be equal Sharers without Distinction between *Jews* and *Gentiles*; which is the very Gospel the Apostle *Paul* published, and as express and full as any thing that was said by that great Apostle of the *Gentiles*. St. *James*, who was another of the chief Apostles of the Circumcision, perfectly agrees with St. *Peter* in this, and shews by a Passage from one of the Prophets that it was foretold concerning the *Messiah*, that *the Gentiles should seek after the Lord, and be called by his Name*, ver. 14—17. The Apostle *John* whom our Author represents as one of the chief Teachers of what he calls the *Jewish Gospel*, after having declared, that he *that believeth not God hath made him a Liar, because he*
believeth

believeth not the Record that God hath given of his Son : proceeds to shew what that Record is : not that God would send him to deliver the *Jews* only, and restore the Kingdom to them ; but he represents this as the Substance of the Gospel Record, that *God hath given unto us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son*, 1 John v. 9, 10. In the same Epistle he declares, that *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous* : and he is the *Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only*, that is, the Sins of us believing *Jews*, but for the Sins of the whole World, ch. ii. 1, 2. Can any Thing possibly be more express and full to shew that Christ is the Saviour of all Men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, without Distinction ? The same Apostle represents the *Christ*, and the *Saviour of the World*, as Terms of the same Signification, John iv. 42. and informs us, that Christ himself declared, that *God so loved the World*, not the *Jews* only but the World of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that *whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting Life*. Where the Salvation of which *Christ* is the Author is represented as a spiritual and eternal Salvation and Happiness to be conferred on all those without Distinction that should sincerely believe and obey him, John iii. 16. And again, he acquaints us that *Christ* declared ; *Other Sheep I have which are not of this Fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my Voice ; and there shall be one Fold and one Shepherd*, ch. x. 16. Can any thing more clearly shew that our Lord Jesus Christ would bring *Jews* and *Gentiles* into one Fold, and that they should both make up one Church under him as their common Shepherd and Saviour ? And could he that represents this as our Lord's own Sense, look upon him as a Saviour of the *Jews* only ? See also ch. xi. 51, 52. which is no less express to this Purpose. And ch. i. 29. St. *Matthew*, who was another of the *Jewish* Apostles, represents Christ as expressly declaring

declaring that the *Jews* the *Children of the Kingdom* should be cast out, and that many should come from the *East*, and from the *West*, and sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* in the *Kingdom of God*, *Matt. viii. 11, 12.* And he applies to *Christ* the *Prophecies* relating to the *Messiah*, that he should shew *Judgment to the Gentiles*: and that in his *Name* should the *Gentiles* trust, *ch. xii. 17, 18, 22.* The same *Apostle* and *Evangelist* instead of representing *Christ* as promising to come and restore the *Kingdom* to the *Jewish Nation*, and deliver them from their *Enemies*, inform us, that he declared to the *Jews*, that the *Kingdom of God* should be taken from them, and given to a *Nation* bringing forth the *Fruits thereof*, *ch. xxi. 43.* And that he foretold the utter *Destruction* of their *City* and *Temple*, and the dreadful *Calamities* that should befall them, *chap. xxi. 41. xxii. 6, 7. and xxiv.* And he represents him as commissioning his *Apostles* to go teach all *Nations*; or as the *Evangelist Mark* has it, to preach the *Gospel to every Creature.*

It appears from this brief Account that the *Gospel* which the *Apostle Paul* preached concerning *Christ's* being the *Author* of a spiritual eternal *Salvation*, and the *Saviour* of all *Men*, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that really believed and obeyed him, was taught clearly and fully by the other *Apostles*. Nor is there any one *Word* in any of their *Writings*, concerning that which he pretends was the whole of the *Gospel* they preached, that is, concerning *Christ's* restoring the *Kingdom* to the *Jews* in their national Sense. And when they write to the believing *Jews*, they never once comfort them with the hope of a national *Restoration* and *Deliverance*, which yet is the only *Thing* he pretends they had in view. But there are many *Passages* in their *Writings* that point to the *End* of the *Jewish* *Polity* as approaching: What our *Author* pretends to offer from the *Book of the Revelation* shall be considered afterward.

This

This may suffice to shew the absolute Falshood of the new Gospel, the Author would put upon the World for the Gospel taught by our Saviour's own Apostles, and which he calls the *Jewish Gospel* in opposition to the Gospel preached by St. Paul. A great deal of his bitter and malicious Investives in the latter part of his Book is built upon this Supposition: by which he undoubtedly intends to expose the New Testament Writers, but really exposes himself, as a Writer that has the Confidence to assert any Thing how false soever which he thinks may serve the Cause he has undertaken.

Let us now proceed to some other Things he offers to shew the Contradictions and Inconsistencies between St. Paul and the other Apostles. He saith, that "the great concerning Debate of that Time was reduced to these two Questions: First, Whether the *Jewish* Converts were still obliged in Point of Religion, to obey the whole Law: And secondly, Whether the *Gentile* Converts, as a Matter of Religion and Conscience, were bound to comply with the Mosaic Law of Profelytism, as the necessary Condition upon which the Christian *Jews* were to hold Communion with them. In both these Points, the Apostles, Elders and Brethren at *Jerusalem* in consequence of their Decree stood to the Affirmative, while *Paul* as stiffly maintained the Negative against them, declaring that he received this, not from Man, or by any intermediate Conveyance, but by immediate Revelation. But the rest of the Apostles it seems never had any such Revelation, nor could *Paul* ever convince them. Nor could this Point of Difference be determined by Miracles. For *Peter* wrought as many and great Miracles as St. Paul, and perhaps St. Paul having all the rest against him, might have been very much distanced as to any Proof from Miracles." And then he pretends

that the Controversy rose so high at last, that it came to an absolute Separation between *St. Paul* and the other Apostles. He labours in this Point in many Words, and very confusedly from p. 54 to p. 81. and returns to it again, p. 361, &c.

With regard to the first Point pretended to be in Difference between *St. Paul* and the other Apostles, viz. "Whether the *Jewish* Converts were still obliged in Point of Religion and Conscience to obey the whole Law: he represents this as the standing Controversy between *St. Paul* and the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision, who obeyed the Law as a Law of Righteousness, or as a necessary Part of Religion and Means of Justification with God; which *Paul* never would submit to, tho' he could comply with the Law in his political Capacity as the Law of his Country." That "when he preached in *Asia* and *Greece*, he ventured to advance a new Doctrine of his own. Wherever he came into the *Jewish* Synagogues, he endeavoured to convince the *Jews* that the ceremonial Law of *Moses* could be no farther binding upon any such *Jews*, as should embrace Christianity, being out of the Confines of *Judea*; for that the ceremonial Law having been really typical and figurative of the great Christian Sacrifice was done away by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ the only true Propitiation for Sin; and consequently could be no longer obliging to the *Jews* any more than to the *Gentiles*, who were now both together to form a new spiritual Society, not under the Jurisdiction of *Moses*, but of Christ alone. That herein *St. Paul* had not one Apostle, Prophet or Teacher of that Age who heartily joined with him except *Timothy*; and tho' *Peter*, *Barnabas*, &c. joined with him in preaching the Gospel for a time, yet they all fell off from him afterward upon this very Quarrel, because they could not agree

“ agree to absolve the *Jewish* Converts from their
 “ Obedience to the Law as the Law of God, or
 “ as a Matter of Religion and Conscience,” see
 p. 54, 71, 72.

All this in which the Author pretends to keep close to the Accounts that are given us in the *Acts* of the Apostles, and in St. Paul's *Epistles*, is strangely misrepresented. He feigneth a Controversy between the Apostle Paul and the other *Apostles* which never subsisted at all. There was indeed a very great Controversy not between St. Paul and the other *Apostles* (for there was an entire Harmony between them in the Gospel they preached) but between that great Apostle and certain *Jewish* Teachers or false Apostles, who were for urging the Observation of the ceremonial Law upon the *Gentile* Converts, as absolutely necessary to Justification and Acceptance with God. Against these St. Paul every where discovereth a great Zeal. And in this he had all the other *Apostles* of our Lord evidently on his side. When they were all met together in the *Jerusalem* Council, they passed a very severe Censure upon them as *troubling* the Churches, and *subverting* Men's Souls, Acts. xv. 24. and at the same time call Paul and Barnabas their beloved Brethren, and give them this high Encomium, that they were Men that had hazarded their Lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 25, 26.

The great Doctrine which that Apostle insisteth upon in opposition to those false Teachers, viz. That we are justified freely by divine Grace thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and that it is by Faith in him that we obtain Remission of Sins and eternal Life: this Doctrine the other Apostles taught as well as he, as is evident from the Passages that have been above cited. Particularly the Apostle Peter declareth this expressly in the Council at *Jerusalem* in the Name of them all, Acts xv. 11. And when the Apostle Paul reproved Peter at Antioch,

Antioch, he represents the Doctrine of their being justified not by the Works of the Law, but by Faith in Jesus Christ, as an uncontested Truth in which he and *Peter* and all true Believers were agreed, *Gal. ii. 15, 16, &c.* And whereas this Writer represents *St. Paul* as preaching in the Synagogues of the Jews that Jesus Christ was the only true Propitiation for Sin, with a view to shew that therefore the ceremonial Law, having been only typical and figurative of the great Christian Sacrifice, was done away by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ; 'tis certain that the other Apostles preached this Doctrine of Christ's being the only true Propitiation for Sin as fully and expressly as the Apostle *Paul*. The Passages to this Purpose are well known*. Nor do they ever once direct the Views of their Christian Converts to the legal Sacrifices as Expiations for Sin. And it ought to be observed that tho' *Peter*, and *James* and *John*, whom this Author represents as the Heads of the Christian Jews, wrote Epistles to them abounding with Exhortations and Counsels of various Kinds, in which they every where animate them to a steady Adherence to the Doctrines and Laws of the Gospel, yet they never so much as once exhort them to adhere to the Observation of the Law of *Moses*, and of the Rites there enjoined. Is it possible to account for this on this Writer's Supposition, that they looked upon the Jewish Converts as obliged to obey the Law of *Moses*, as the necessary Means of Justification and Acceptance with God; and that they had a standing Controversy on this Head with the Apostle *Paul* who taught the contrary? And if this had been the Case, can it be supposed that *St. Peter* in his second and last Epistle written a little before his Death, would have called *St. Paul* his beloved Brother, or have recommended all his Epistles to the Christian Converts as written with great Wisdom,

* See 1 *Pet. i. 19, 20. ii. 21, 24. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. iv. 10. John i. 29.*

and have reckoned them among the *Scriptures*, that is, among the Writings that were divinely inspired? See 2 *Pet.* iii. 15, 16. After the Apostle *Paul* had, according to our Author, been preaching throughout *Asia* and *Greece*, that the Law of *Moses* was no longer obligatory on the *Jews*, we find him going up and saluting the Church at *Jerusalem*: and not the least Hint of any Dissatisfaction, but a perfect Harmony between them, *Acts* xviii. 21, 22. And afterwards at his last going up to *Jerusalem* the Brethren there received him, and them that were with him gladly. *St. James*, and all the *Elders* that were with him treated him with great Kindness, and called him *Brother*. And their advising him what Course to take to remove the Prejudices some of the *Jewish* Converts had entertained against him, shews their great Tenderness towards him, and how far they were from looking upon him as an Enemy: and at the same time it seemeth plainly to shew that what they advised him to do was not from any Opinion they had of the absolute Obligation of the Law of *Moses* in Point of Religion and Conscience, but for avoiding Offence: in which their Conduct was perfectly agreeable to his own, *Acts* xxi. 17—25. The same Reflection may be made upon *St. Peter's* Conduct at *Antioch*. For it appeareth from what *St. Paul* said to him, that before certain Persons came from *Jerusalem*, he did eat freely with the *Gentiles*, and being a *Jew* lived after the Manner of the *Gentiles*, and not as do the *Jews*: tho' he afterwards declined this, for fear of offending some of the *Jews* that came from *Jerusalem*: which shews that the Principle he went upon in observing the Law, as well as the Apostle *Paul*, was the Fear of giving Offence, and not any Opinion he had of its absolute Obligation in Point of Conscience, *Gal.* ii. 12, 14. And *St. Paul* expressly tells us, that when he communicated the Gospel which he preached among the *Gentiles* to the Apostles at *Jerusalem*, they saw that the Gospel of the Uncircum-

cision

cision was committed unto him, as the Gospel of the Circumcision was unto Peter: for that he that wrought effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the Circumcision, the same was mighty in him (Paul) towards the Gentiles. And that accordingly, Peter, James, and John gave to him and Barnabas the Right Hand of Fellowship, that they should go unto the Heathen, and themselves unto the Circumcision, Gal. ii. 2—9. Where nothing is more plain than that the other Apostles approved the Doctrine which St. Paul had preached, and owned his divine Mission: and that it was the same Gospel that was taught by Paul and Barnabas, and by the other Apostles, only called the Gospel of the Uncircumcision as preached among the Gentiles, and the Gospel of the Circumcision as preached to the Jews. Taking all together it doth not appear that there was the least Difference between St. Paul and the other Apostles with regard to the Obligation of the Mosaick Law. Neither he nor they looked upon it as absolutely obligatory in Point of Conscience, and as necessary to our Justification and Acceptance under the Gospel, tho' both he and they looked upon it to be still lawful to observe the Mosaick Rites in Compliance with weak Consciences. So that there was a perfect Harmony between them in Doctrine and Practice.

This Author in order to make it appear that there was an Opposition between St. Paul and the other Apostles, gives a very wrong Representation of his Conduct; as if in all the Synagogues where he preached in Asia Minor and Greece, he absolved the Jewish Converts from all Obligation to the Mosaick Law; and made the absolute Abrogation of that Law to Jews as well as Gentiles, the constant Subject of his Preaching. Whereas if we examine the Account that is given us of St. Paul's preaching in the Synagogues of Asia Minor and Greece, nothing of this appears. We read that he preached to the Jews in their Synagogues that Jesus was the

Christ the Son of God, that he died for our Sins according to the Scripture, that he rose again from the Dead, that thro' Faith in him Remission of Sins was to be obtained. He preached Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.* And if the *Jews* to whom he preached were brought to acknowledge that *Jesus* was the *Christ*, and to look to him for Salvation in a hearty Compliance with the self-denying Terms of the Gospel-Covenant, it doth not appear by any one Instance in the whole New Testament, that he was at all troublesome to them about the Observation of the Mosaick Rites; he left them still to follow their old Customs, till by a farther Light, and a more thorough Knowledge and Acquaintance with the Gospel they should see that they were free.

Here it is proper to observe that the *judaizing* Christians in that Age who professed to believe in *Christ*, and yet continued to observe the Law of *Moses*, were of two different Kinds. There were some of them that looked upon that Law to be of such *indispensible* Necessity that no Man could be saved but by the Observation of that Law, and therefore they urged it even upon the *Gentile* Converts. They laid such a Stress on Circumcision, and the other ritual Precepts of that Law that they would not acknowledge any for their Brethren, or look upon them as Members of the Church, except they submitted to those Rites. Against these the Apostle *Paul* all along zealously contends. And these all the other *Apostles* opposed and condemned no less than he: and many of them afterwards openly apostatized from Christianity, as may be gathered from several Passages in the New Testament. But there were other Christian *Jews* that were for observing the Law of *Moses* from a con-

* See for an Account of the Subject of St. *Paul's* preaching, *Acts* ix. 20—23. xiii. 23—45, 50. xvii. 2, 3, 5. xviii. 5, 6. xx. 21. 1 *Cor.* i. 23. ii. 2. xv. 3, 4.

scientious *Scruple* that it was not yet repealed, who yet were of a different Character from the former. They knew God had prescribed those Rites, and were not satisfied that they were as yet abrogated. and therefore tho' they regarded the believing *Gentiles* as their Brethren in Christ, and were not for imposing the Observation of the Law upon them; yet they thought that they themselves as *Jews*, were obliged by virtue of the divine Precept to observe those peculiar Rites that God had prescribed to their Nation. But then at the same time they expected to be justified and saved only thro' the free Grace of God offered in the Redeemer; here they laid the Stress of their Hopes, *looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life*. Our Author seems not able or not willing to conceive this. He thinks that if they observed the Mosaick Rites at all as obligatory by virtue of the Divine Command, they must observe them as *necessary* Parts of Religion, and the necessary Means of Justification, and must expect to be accepted and justified on the Account of them. For where *positive* Things are joined in the same Divine Law with *moral*, the positive are as necessary as the moral to our Acceptance with God, and are put on an equal Foot in Point of Conscience as the necessary Terms of Acceptance, because equally required. This is the Substance of his arguing, *p. 52, 53*. But it doth not follow that because positive and moral Precepts are both required in the same Law, therefore they are *equally* Parts of Religion, and of equal Necessity in Point of Acceptance with God. For tho' every good Man that looks upon any positive Precept as required by God ought to obey it, whilst he thinks it required: yet he does not lay the principal Stress of his Hopes of the Divine Favour and Acceptance on such Observances, but on Things of a higher Nature. And therefore it is very supposable that the *Jewish* Christians might still look

upon themselves to be obliged to observe the Mo-
saick Rites by virtue of the Divine Command which
they did not see to be yet repealed; and yet expect
the Pardon of their Sins, and Acceptance with God,
and eternal Life, only thro' the Free-Grace and
Mercy of God in Jesus Christ as the great appoint-
ed *Mediator* and *Saviour* of Mankind, who is the
Propitiation for the Sins of the World. And these
were always treated with great Regard and Ten-
derness by St. Paul and the other *Apostles*. He
speaks of the Saints at *Jerusalem* with an affection-
ate Tenderness, and stirs up the *Gentiles* to contribute
liberally for their Supply. He forbids the *Jewish* and
Gentile Converts to condemn or *despise* one another on
Account of their observing or not observing the legal
Rites and Ceremonies; see *Rom. xiv.* and declares,
that in *Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any
Thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh
by Love, Gal. v. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 19: That the King-
dom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteous-
ness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom.
xiv. 17.* He was for receiving those that are weak
in Faith, and who still thought themselves obliged
to observe the legal Rites; and was for having them
all walk by the same Rule as far as they were agreed,
and for their bearing with one another till God
should farther enlighten them, *Phil. iii. 15, 16.*
And it is probable that many of these came in time
to see their Liberty, and that by treating them with
Gentleness and Forbearance, they by degrees over-
came their Prejudices and Scruples, till at length
they entirely joined with the *Gentile* Converts.
Such was the wise and moderate Conduct of the
Apostle Paul and the other *Apostles* in this Matter.
And accordingly it is evident that tho' this great
Apostle was fully satisfied and persuaded by Reve-
lation from *Christ* himself, that the Law of *Moses*
was no longer obligatory in Point of Conscience
since the Death of *Christ*, yet he looked upon those
legal

legal Rites as Things which he himself might still lawfully observe for a while in order to promote the main Interests of Christianity. He declares concerning himself that *to the Jews he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews*, 1 Cor. ix. 20. And it appears how careful he was not to offend them, in that *he circumcised Timothy because of the Jews which were in those Parts; because they knew all that his Father was a Greek*, Acts xvi. 3. And it is likely that he who was so cautious of offending them, should, as this Author represents it, make it the constant Subject of his Preaching in *all their Synagogues*, that the Law of *Moses* was entirely abrogated, and that the *Jews* themselves were absolved from all Obligations to observe it? We find him afterwards *shaving his Head in Cenchrea, for he had a Vow*, Acts xviii. 18. and *keeping the Feast at Jerusalem*, ver. 21. It was therefore a false Accusation that was brought against him, tho' this Writer saith that it was a Matter of Fact that could not be denied, that *he had taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their Children, neither to walk according to their Customs*, Acts xxi. 21. They accused *Paul* as if he had every where taught that it was absolutely unlawful for the *Jews* to circumcise their Children, or observe any of the legal Rites. This was the Charge: and this Charge was not true. He had never urged it as absolutely unlawful for the *Jews* to observe the Mosaical Law, or their ancient Customs. And tho' he had declared strongly against urging Circumcision upon the *Gentiles*, yet instead of forbidding the *Jews* to circumcise their Children, he himself had circumcised *Timothy* because his Mother was a *Jewess*, tho' his Father was a *Greek*. And taking the Accusation in this View the Advice they give is very reasonable: that he should go and purify himself that *all may know that those Things whereof they were in-*

formed concerning thee are nothing, but that thou thy self walkest orderly, and keepest the Law, ver. 24. They urged him to do no more than what he himself had done on former Occasions. For he had shaved his Head at Cenchrea; and had a Vow upon him. And both his own former Practice, and what he now did at Jerusalem, was a full Vindication of him against the Charge advanced against him, that he had absolutely forbidden the Jews to observe the Law, and had declared it utterly unlawful for them to observe the Mosaick Rites and Customs.

To account for this Conduct of the Apostle Paul and the other Apostles, two Things are to be considered. The one is, that they knew it was the Will of God that the Law of Moses with its peculiar Rites should be no longer strictly obligatory in Point of Conscience on the Disciples of Jesus: and that Christ by his Coming, and by his Death, had really superseded that Law, and set them free from the Obligation of its Ceremonies and Ordinances. The other is, that they also knew by the Spirit of God that it was his Will that the Observation of that Law and its peculiar Rites should be indulged and tolerated for a while: and that the Abrogation of it should not be urged upon the Jews all at once, but by degrees. And the Wisdom and Reasonableness of this Method is very manifest to any one that duly considers the Circumstances of the Case, and of that Time. The whole Jewish Nation had the highest Veneration for the Law of Moses. Nor could it be wondered at, if they did not easily part with a Law which they were assured was of Divine Original, and had been confirmed by such illustrious Attestations from Heaven, as well as had been the Law of their Nation for so long a Succession of Ages. God could indeed have commanded them all at once immediately after Christ's Resurrection to lay aside all the Mosaick

Mosaick Ceremonies, to which they had been so long accustomed, and could have absolutely forbidden the Observation of it; in which Case no Christian could with a safe Conscience, or consistently with the Christian Profession have observed any of the Ceremonies of that Law. But this would have been too great a Shock, and joined to their other Prejudices arising from *Christ's* Sufferings and Crucifixion, and the Meanness of his external Appearance here on Earth, would have proved such an Obstacle to their embracing *Christianity*, as they could scarce have overcome. It seemed therefore but reasonable to indulge them a little as the Case was circumstanced, and to remove their Prejudices by degrees; which were of such a Kind as might well raise Scruples in Men of sincere and honest Minds. And accordingly it pleased God in his great Wisdom and Goodness so to order it, that that Abrogation and Repeal of the Law of *Moses* was gradually hinted and signified to them, and they were prepared for it by degrees. The Apostles first preached to the *Jews*, and to them only Salvation thro' Jesus Christ and him crucified, agreeably to our Saviour's own Directions who had commanded them to begin at *Jerusalem*. Afterwards they preached the Gospel to the *Samaritans*, whom the *Jews* despised as much as they did the *Gentiles*, Acts viii. and to them was the Holy Ghost given upon their believing in Christ by the Imposition of the Apostles Hands. This prepared them for what next happened; and that was that *Peter* by express Revelation was ordered to preach to the devout *Gentiles* or Profelytes of the Gate, that is, to those among the *Gentiles* that worshipped the true God, tho' they did not observe the Rites of the ceremonial Law; as in the famous Instance of *Cornelius*. *Peter* was at the same time taught by a Vision from Heaven, that the legal Distinction between *clean* and *unclean* Meats was now no longer obligatory;

obligatory; and that the Difference of *Jews* and *Gentiles* was now to be taken away. And it pleased God to pour forth the *Holy Ghost* in his extraordinary Gifts and Operations upon *Cornelius*, and those that were with him, and that in an immediate Manner without the laying on of *Peter's* Hands, as he had done upon the *Apostles* themselves at the Beginning. This tended to remove a strong Prejudice the *Jews* had entertained, and to convince them that the *Gentiles* were now to be taken into the same Church with themselves, and were to form one sacred Society under *Jesus Christ*. Afterward, when the Gospel had been preached for some time to the devout *Gentiles* or Profelytes of the Gate, it was at last preached to the idolatrous *Gentiles*; and the Apostle *Paul* was in a more especial Manner set apart to that Work. And in the mean time the Doctrines which he and the other Apostles unanimously preached concerning Remission of Sins, and Justification thro' Faith in Christ, concerning his being the only true Propitiation for our Sins, and his being the Saviour of all Men without Distinction, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that should sincerely believe and obey him, tended to prepare the *Jews* for the entire Abrogation of the Mosaical Oeconomy, which followed from the Principles they laid down*. And lastly this Apostle writ

* The Accounts that were then published by the Apostles and apostolical Men of the Life and Discourses of our blessed Saviour, shewed that he himself had declared that nothing that entereth into the Mouth defileth a Man, which was a plain Intimation that the Mosaical Injunctions concerning the Distinction of Meats, and by which the Difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles* was very much kept up were now to be no longer obligatory. And finally the Apostle *John* whom this Author represents as one of the principal *Jewish* Apostles, and at the Head of the Christian *Jews*, published it to the World that our Lord *Jesus* had declared, that the Hour was coming when neither in this Mountain, viz. at Mount *Gerizim*, nor yet at *Jerusalem*

a whole Epistle directed particularly to the *Hebrews*, the proper Design of which is to prove that the legal Dispensation is abolished by Jesus Christ. And soon after this the *Jewish* Temple and Polity were intirely destroyed, as *Jesus* had foretold, whereby the Exercise of the legal Priesthood, and the Observation of the Mosaick Rites, particularly those relating to Sacrifices, was rendered impracticable. Thus it appears in how just and wise a Progression the Gospel of *Jesus* was published, and successive Degrees of Light communicated, and the glorious Scheme and Design of God gradually unfolded, till the Christian *Jews* were prepared for receiving it in its full Glory and entire Harmony. And whilst this Design was carrying on, it was agreeable to the Will of God, and the Designs the Divine Wisdom had in View, that the *Apostles* should observe the Mosaick Rites, lest the throwing them off at once should have created too great a Prejudice against them and their Doctrine in the Minds of the *Jews*, until the time came, which the *Apostles* knew by special Revelation, and by Christ's own express Predictions was near at Hand, when that Polity was to be destroyed.

Let us now consider the second main Point in Difference as this Author states it between *St. Paul* and the other *Apostles*, which he pretends relates to the Law of *Profelytism*; viz. "Whether the Gentile Converts as a Matter of Religion and Conscience were bound to comply with the Mosaick Law of Profelytism, as the necessary Condition upon which the *Jews* were to maintain Communion with them, see p. 79." And here also he supposes "a great and very material Difference

Jerusalem should Men worship the Father, but the true Worshipers should worship him in Spirit and in Truth, Joh. iv. 21, 23, whereby it appeared that the Distinction of Places, and the typical ritual Service established in the Law of *Moses* was to be abolished under the Gospel.

“ between *St. Paul* and the other *Apostles*, parti-
 “ cularly *St. Peter*.” He asserts, that “ the *Je-*
 “ *rusalem* Council enjoined this Law of Profely-
 “ tism upon the *Gentile* Converts as necessary, or
 “ as a Matter of Religion and Conscience, with-
 “ out which the Christian *Jews* could not be justi-
 “ fied in communicating with them, or receiving
 “ them as Brethren. That this soon occasioned
 “ fresh Troubles and Disturbances in the Church.
 “ For *St. Paul* could never submit to the Imposi-
 “ tion of this Law of Profelytism upon his *Gen-*
 “ *tile* Converts, at least not in the Sense of the
 “ Council; as necessary, as a Matter of Religion,
 “ or as the Law of God upon the Authority of
 “ *Moses*; tho’ yet he allowed them to comply with
 “ it occasionally, as a Matter of Liberty, and for
 “ the sake of Peace, to prevent an open Rupture
 “ with the Christian *Jews*, p. 72, 77. He repre-
 “ sents *St. Paul* as not satisfied with the Decree of
 “ the *Jerusalem* Council; that he looked upon it
 “ as a joining two contrary and inconsistent Reli-
 “ gions, and that he laboured under the Disad-
 “ vantage of being opposed in all his Ministry by
 “ the whole *Jewish* Nation, and of having a De-
 “ cree of Council, standing out against him, passed
 “ at *Jerusalem* by a large Assembly of apostolical
 “ Christian *Jews*, p. 71.” and he resumes this
 Subject again, p. 361. and p. 376, &c.

Here the Author positively asserts several Things
 for which there is no Foundation in the sacred His-
 tory; tho’ he pretends to great Accuracy, and to
 deliver nothing but what is perfectly agreeable to
 the *Memoirs of that great Apostle in the Acts*, and
 in his own genuine *Epistles*.

With regard to the *Jerusalem* Council he posi-
 tively asserts over and over, that they prescribed
 the Things mentioned in their Decree, viz. the ab-
 staining from Things offered to Idols, from Things
 strangled, from Blood, and from Fornication, as
 necessary,

necessary, because it was the Law of Profelytism enjoined by Moses; and asserts, that it was certainly the Sense of that Council that the Law of Profelytism was the Law of God given by Moses, and not yet abrogated and repealed, and therefore must be binding in Point of Religion and Conscience. p. 77, 78. But it is plain that the Jerusalem Council could not urge their Decree precisely as the Law of Profelytism enjoined by Moses, because Moses did not give any Law of Profelytism precisely answering to that Decree. For with regard to those Profelytes that were to be incorporated with the Jews, and entered into their national Inclosure, as our Author expresseth it, and who were usually called the Profelytes of Righteousness, they were according to the Mosaick Constitution to be circumcised, and to observe the whole Law of Moses, and its peculiar Rites: And hence the strictest among the judaizing Christians, such as those mentioned, *Acts* xv. 1, 5. were for having this Law of Profelytism observed with regard to those of the Gentiles that were to be taken into the Church. They would have them circumcised in order to their acknowledging them as Brethren, and as belonging to the same Body. But in the Council that was convened to judge of this Matter St. Peter declared, with whom the other Apostles agreed, that as God had put no difference between the Gentiles and Jews, but had given them the Holy Ghost without their being circumcised, so they ought without being circumcised or obliged to observe the Law to be regarded by the Christian Jews as their Brethren, and as making up one Body or sacred Society with them in Jesus Christ. So that it is so far from being true as this Writer asserts, p. 361. that they would not allow the Gentiles the Privileges of Christ's Kingdom except they were profelyted or naturalized, and thereby entered into their national Inclosure and Separation from the rest of the World: and that therefore Peter who

who had the Keys, shut the Gates of the Kingdom against the whole Gentile World that would not submit to the Law of Profelytism or Jewish Naturalization; and that this Point was carried in the first Council at Jerusalem, by all the Jewish Apostles, Elders, and Brethren, against all St. Paul's Remonstrances and earnest Endeavours to the contrary. I say, this is so far from being true, that the very contrary to this is manifestly true; that St. Peter and the whole Council carried it, that the Gentiles should not be obliged to submit to the Law of Profelytism or Jewish Naturalization, which necessarily included their being circumcised and obliged to observe the Law.

With regard to the *Profelytes of the Gate*, as they are usually called, that is, those among the Gentiles that worshipped the true God but were not circumcised, tho' they were allowed to live among them, they were never regarded as *naturalized* or *entered into their national Inclosure*: Nor doth it appear that the Law of Moses required that they should abstain from *Things Strangled and from Blood*: on the contrary, that Law allowed them to eat that which *died of itself*, and which therefore had the Blood in it, *Deut. xiv. 21.* which was not allowed either to the *natural Jews*, or to the *Profelytes of Righteousness*. It is plain therefore that if the *Jerusalem Council* required these Things of the *Gentile Converts*, it was not because this was the very Law of Profelytism enjoined by Moses. For the Things required in the apostolical Decree were not the Things precisely required and insisted upon in that Law, either with regard to the *Profelytes of Righteousness*, or the *Profelytes of the Gate*. Of the former more was required than is urged in that Decree, of the latter not so much. They did not therefore in that Prohibition go merely upon the Authority and Law of Moses. They only declare that it seemed fit to the Holy Ghost, and to them,

to lay upon the Brethren no greater Burden than the Things urged in that Decree. So that it was they under the Guidance of the *Holy Ghost*, and by his Authority, that laid these Injunctions upon the *Gentile Converts*, and they did not put them upon them, as what they were bound to by the Law of *Moses*, which they were under no Obligation to observe.

If it be inquired, upon what *Reasons* they proceeded in this Matter, and why it seemed fit to the *Holy Ghost*, and to them, to lay these Injunctions upon the *Gentile Converts*: the Circumstances and true State of the Case must be considered. Tho' the *Jews* were wont to regard the *Profelytes of the Gate*, who worshipped the true God without being circumcised as the *pious among the Gentiles*, yet they still looked upon them as *Gentiles* tho' not *Idolaters*; and were so far from regarding them as *Brethren*, or belonging to the same Body or Church with themselves (as they did the *Profelytes of Righteousness* who were circumcised, and observed the whole Law) that they would not converse familiarly or eat with them*, see *Acts* x. 28. xi. 3. But now by the *Christian Institution* the *Jews* were to regard all those among the *Gentiles* that believed in *Christ* and embraced his Gospel, as *Members* of the same Church, and forming one Body with themselves under *Christ* the Head, without their being circumcised, or obliged to observe the Law of *Moses* at all. This was a new Doctrine to the *Jews*, and was in Effect a destroying the *peculium* of the *Jews*, and establishing a new Constitution, or erecting a new Church consisting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, into which it was not necessary to be initiated by Circumcision. But tho' the *Gentiles* were thus to be

* In this the latter Constitutions of the *Jews* had carried it to a greater Strictness than the original Law of *Moses*. See *Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent. lib. ii. cap. 5.*

admitted to the full Enjoyment of all Church Privileges under the Gospel without being obliged to the Mosaick Law, yet it seemed fit to lay some Injunctions upon them, without which, as the Case then stood, such a near and intimate Communion between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as all belonging to one Church and sacred Society, would have been impracticable. To this End they were to abstain from every thing that had the *Appearance* of countenancing the Heathen *Idolatry*; and Dr. *Spencer* hath taken great Pains to shew, that the several Things prohibited in this Decree were regarded as *Signs* of *Idolatry* or *Ethnicism*, and were used among the Heathen in their *Idol-Worship* *. Of this Kind was not only the eating *Things offered unto Idols*, but the eating *Blood* and *Things strangled*, both which were Things to which the *Jews* had the highest Aversion and Abhorrence; and the allowing the *Gentile* Converts to eat those Things as the Case was then circumstanced, would have absolutely prevented the *Jews* eating with their *Gentile* Brethren, or having that intimate Society and Communion with them which was proper to lay the Foundation of a true Harmony as became Members of the same Church. And as all manner of Impurity was extremely common among the *Gentiles*, and even an Attendant of their *Idol-Worship*, it was thought proper to mention this particularly, that as a *holy* People to the Lord they should abstain from all Impurity and Uncleanness and unlawful Mixtures. For that the Word *porneia* Fornication is often used as a general Word for all Impurity, is very well known.

These are the Things expressly mentioned in the apostolical Decree. They are all there called *necessary Things*. But it is not declared or explained in what Sense they were so. If they were necessary

* See *Spencer. de Legib. Hebr. Lib. ii. Dissert. in Act. xv. 20.*
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at all upon any Account, whether at that Time or perpetually, it is sufficient to answer the Import of the Word. And tho' they are all comprised in one Word *necessary*, it doth not follow that they are all equally and absolutely necessary. The abstaining from *Fornication* appeareth both from the Reason of the Thing, and from many express Passages of the New Testament, to be of *moral* and perpetual Obligation. But if other Things mentioned in that Decree were only forbidden, because they were looked upon at that Time as outward *Signs* of Communion with the Heathen *Idolaters* in their Superstition and false Worship, and because they would have proved Matter of great *Scandal* and Offence to the *Jews*, and would have absolutely cut off brotherly Correspondence between them and the *Gentiles*, as Brethren and of the same Body with themselves, this was a valuable End, and sufficient to justify that Prohibition, and shew the Seasonableness and Necessity of it at that Time. And on this Supposition, when the Situation of Things was altered, the Reason of the Injunction, and the Necessity arising from it might cease.

But in whatever Way we understand that Decree, there is not the least Proof that ever the Apostle *Paul* counter-acted it; or that ever there was the least Difference between him and the other Apostles on that Head. As to *Fornication*, which is forbidden in that Decree, it is evident that it is frequently and expressly forbidden in St. *Paul's* Epistles, and that Prohibition is enforced with Arguments that shew it to be of perpetual Obligation. With regard to *Meats offered to Idols*, St. *Paul* doth not allow the *Gentile* Converts to eat Things offered to Idols in the Idol-Temple, because that was plainly to countenance Idolatry; and he represents it as a being *Partaker of the Table of Devils*, and as having *Fellowship with Devils*. And as to Meats in private Houses, if they were told that

they had been offered unto Idols, they were not to eat of them for Fear of giving Scandal. So that in this Sense he thought it *necessary* to abstain from these Things. As to *Blood and Things strangled*, the Apostle nowhere mentions them in any of his *Epistles*, and therefore it cannot be proved that he ever taught the *Gentiles* to eat them, nor consequently can it be proved, that in this he contradicted that Decree. If his general Declarations, that *nothing is unclean of itself*, that every *Creature of God is good*, and to be received with *Thanksgiving*, and that they were to eat *whatsoever was sold in the Shambles asking no Question for Conscience sake*, be judged an Allowance to eat Blood, &c. then our Saviour's Declaration which *St. Matthew* and *Mark* take Notice of, that nothing *that entereth into the Mouth, and passeth into the Draught defileth a Man*, may be equally thought an Allowance to eat Things strangled and Blood. And it may be argued, that the Apostles, who knew of this Declaration of our Lord, and particularly the Apostle *Peter* who had been taught by a Vision from Heaven not to call any Thing *common or unclean*, did not by *Things necessary* in that Decree intend to signify that all these Things were *perpetually necessary* in the Nature of the Thing, but *necessary* at that Time, and in that Circumstance of Things. And any one that knows any Thing of the Apostle *Paul's* Doctrine, cannot but be sensible that he thought it necessary in Case of giving Offence to weak Consciences, to abstain from Things which, otherwise and in themselves considered, he judged lawful. So that upon the whole it doth not appear but that he entirely approved of that Decree, and of the Principles upon which it proceeded. This Writer himself observeth " that it was resolved in the "*Jerusalem Council* to lay no farther Burthen upon the *Gentile Converts* than a few Things which were thought necessary by the Holy Ghost, and " them

“ them, to avoid the Appearance of Idolatry; and
 “ that the *Gentile* Profelytes might not seem to
 “ countenance the Temple-Worship of the Hea-
 “ thens,” p. 59. And if this was the Necessity
 intended, it was perfectly agreeable to the Senti-
 ments of the Apostle *Paul*. This Writer indeed
 pretends that *St. Paul* not submitting to that De-
 cree raised fresh Troubles and Disturbances in the
Church. But there is not the least Hint of this
 Kind either in the *Acts* or the *Epistles*, nor was
 there ever any Accusation brought against him on
 this Account. On the contrary we are expressly
 told that *Paul* and *Silas* in their Progress to visit
 the Churches, as they passed thro’ the Cities, deli-
 vered them the Decrees to keep that were ordained of
 the Apostles and Elders which were at *Jerusalem*,
Acts xvi. 4. And at his last coming to *Jerusalem*
 when he returned from his great Progress in preach-
 ing to the idolatrous Gentiles, tho’ *St. James* and the
 Elders that were with him mention the apostolical
 Decree, they do not say one Word of *St. Paul’s*
 having acted against it, but glorified God for what
 he had done amongst the *Gentiles*, *Acts* xxi.
 19—25. And whereas he talks of a very material
 Difference between *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* about
 the Law of *Profelytism*; there is not the least Ac-
 count of any Difference they ever had on this Head.
 For the Difference referred to *Gal. ii.* doth not pro-
 perly relate to that Matter, nor indeed to any Dif-
 ference of Sentiment between those two great A-
 postles. On the contrary, *St. Paul* blames *Peter*
 for having acted in a Manner not very agreeable to
 that Doctrine in which they were both agreed, and
 not very consistent with the Design of the aposto-
 lical Decree, which manifestly was to ingage *Jews*
 and *Gentiles* to cultivate a brotherly Communion
 with one another.

Thus after all the Stir this Author makes about
 the mighty Differences between *St. Paul* and the

other *Apostles*, it appears there was an Harmony between them in their Doctrines: and that therefore there is no need of considering the pretended Difficulty of deciding the Controversies between them by *Miracles*. The *Miracles* they wrought all concurred to give an illustrious Attestation to the same Gospel which was uniformly preached by them all. And whereas he tells us that *Timothy* was the only Teacher in that Age that heartily joined with *St. Paul*, and that *St. Peter*, *John Mark*, and *Barnabas*, and all the other Apostles and apostolical Teachers thought themselves obliged at last to separate from *St. Paul*, because they could not agree to absolve the Jewish Converts from their Obligation to the Mosaic Law, and left him to preach his own Gospel his own way: this is asserted without any Foundation in the inspired Writings to support it. What was the Cause of *John Mark's* leaving *Paul*, of which we have an Account, *Acts* xiii. 13. we are not told. But there is not the least Hint that it was for any such Reason as this Writer pretends. And if *Barnabas* was, as he insinuates, as much offended as *Mark*, and for the same Reason, why did he not then leave him too? instead of which we find him after this joining with *Paul* in preaching the Gospel throughout the lesser *Asia*, and suffering Persecutions on the Account of it as well as he. And he was ready to have gone with him another Progress, and would have taken *Mark* with him too, which *Paul* would not suffer, because he had left them abruptly in their former Progress. And this and not any Difference between them in Doctrine was the Cause of the Contention that then arose between *Paul* and *Barnabas*. But it is plain from *St. Paul's* own Epistles, that this *Mark*, whom our Author supposes to have entirely separated from him upon the Difference between them in Doctrines, was, after that Separation mentioned *Acts* xiii. 13. signally helpful to him; and especially

especially in the latter Part of *St. Paul's* Life, when his Opposition to the Law must have been much better known than it could have been at the Time that *Mark* first left him, which was in the Beginning of his first Progress. In some of his last Epistles he calls him *one of his Fellow-Labourers*, and *Fellow-Workers unto the Kingdom of God*; and saith that he had been a *Comfort to him*, and was *profitable to him for the Ministry*, *Philem. 24. Col. iv. 10, 11. 2 Tim. iv. 11* And the same *Mark* is also mentioned by *St. Peter* with great Regard, *1 Pet. v. 13.* where he calls him his *Son*. *Silas* or *Silvanus* was also a Person of eminent Note among the Jewish Christians at *Jerusalem*, as appears from *Acts xv. 22, 32.* And he went along with *St. Paul* in his second Progress, who joins him and *Timothy* with himself in the Inscriptions of his two Epistles to the *Thessalonians*; and assures the *Corinthians* that the Gospel preached by all three was entirely the same, and that they perfectly harmonised in it, *2 Cor. i. 19.* This is that *Silvanus* whom *St. Peter* calls a *faithful Brother*, and whom he sent to confirm the Churches, *1 Pet. v. 12.* And this is another Proof of the great Harmony there was between those two great Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*. The same Persons were assistant to them both, sometimes to one, sometimes to the other, in preaching the same Gospel. To which may be added what Commendation I mentioned before the great *St. Peter* gives of *St. Paul*, and of his Writings a little before his own Death, *2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.* It is evident therefore that when *St. Paul* sometimes calls the Gospel he preached his Gospel, it could not be his Intention to insinuate that it was a Gospel different from what the other Apostles preached and taught. For he represents Christians as *built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, *Eph. ii. 20.* and speaking of the Mystery of calling the *Gentiles to be Fellow-Heirs and of the*

same Body with the Jews, which he represents as made known to him by special immediate Revelation, he expressly declares that this *Mystery* was then also revealed unto the Holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, Eph. iii. 2, 3, 5.

There needs nothing more to be said concerning the pretended Difference between St. Paul and the other Apostles.

But I cannot pass it by without some Notice that, notwithstanding the Veneration he professes for that great Apostle, the Representation he makes of his Conduct at his Trial is such as under Pretence of vindicating him insinuates several Reflections upon his Character. He observes, that the *Apostle* does not own that which was the chief Matter of Complaint against him, and the Ground of all his Prosecutions by the Jews, namely, that in all their Synagogues in Greece and Asia Minor he had maintained that the Law was abrogated by Christ's Death and Resurrection, and that in Christ there was no Difference between Jew and Gentile, p. 67, 68. To which it is sufficient to answer, that it was not the Apostle's Business to accuse himself. He puts his Adversaries upon the Proof, and it is evident they were not able to prove the Charge they brought against him. Nor was it true in Fact, as I have shewn, that he had preached in all the Synagogues that the Jews were absolved from the Obligation of the Mosaic Law.

The *Asiatick Jews* * were not capable of making good their Accusation against him; and thought

* The *Asian Jews* mentioned Acts xxi. 27. were not, as this Writer pretends, Christian Jews that believed in Jesus, but they were unbelieving Jews who were enraged at him for preaching up Jesus as the Messiah, and for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, which they interpreted as an Endeavour to draw the People from Moses. And on the same Account they also persecuted the other Apostles and Christians, as is plain in the

thought therefore to have run him down by general Clamours, concerning his raising Tumults, and profaning the Temple. The Defence *Paul* makes for himself is just and noble, and hath a becoming Freedom and Boldness in it as well as Caution. He denies the Charge of Sedition and Tumult, of profaning the Temple, or of having offended against the Law, but at the same time never in the least disguised his being a *Christian*: he freely owns that *after the Way which they called Heresy so worshipped* he the God of his Fathers, and at the same time declares what was literally true, that he *believed all Things which were written in the Law and the Prophets*. He with a noble Zeal bore an illustrious Testimony to our Lord that he was the *Christ*, and that he had risen from the dead, and had sent him to preach to the *Gentiles*; which was the principal Thing that provoked the *Jews* in the first Apology he made for himself before them, *Acts* xxii. 21, 22. And whereas this Writer insinuates that till his last Defence before *Agrippa* and *Festus*, *Paul* had not owned the Resurrection of *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was the main Point which had raised the Malice of the *Jews* against him, but only asserted the Resurrection of the dead, in general; which they believed as well as he, p. 67. This is far from being a true

the Case of *Stephen*, and the Apostles *James* and *Peter*. It was the unbelieving *Jews* that were the Authors of all the Tumults and Persecutions that were raised against *St. Paul*, and not as this Writer asserts, the *Jews* that professed to believe in *Christ*. Nor can any Thing be more false than that which he concludes his whole Account of this Matter with, p. 80, 81. That it is evident from all the Memoirs of this great Apostle's Life in the History of the *Acts*, and his own genuine Epistles, that all his Sufferings and Persecutions all along arose from his struggling against the Superstition of the *Christian Jews*, and their pretended religious Obligations to the Law of *Moses*, which they thought themselves still as much obliged by as before. Whereas not one of the Persecutions there mentioned were raised against him by the *Christian Jews*, but by those *Jews* that denied that *Jesus* was the *Christ*.

Representation: for it appears from the Account *Festus* himself gives *Agrippa*, that before the Apology *Paul* made in the Presence of that Prince, he had affirmed not merely the Resurrection in general, but the Resurrection of *Jesus*, and that this was the great Question between him and the *Jews*. *Festus* tells *Agrippa* that the *Jews* had certain Questions against *Paul* of their own Superstition, and of one *Jesus* which was dead, whom *Paul* affirmed to be alive, *Acts* xxv. 19. And the Connection there was between the Resurrection of *Jesus* and the general Resurrection, both in the Truth of the Thing, and in *St. Paul's* own Scheme, was such, that the Apostle might justly represent himself as called in Question about the Resurrection of the dead, when he was called in Question about the Resurrection of *Jesus*, the best Proof and Pledge of it. And in Fact that was the great Reason why the *Sadducees*, the professed Enemies of the Resurrection, were so zealous against the Christian Scheme. Tho' we do not hear much of their Opposition to *Christ* before, yet no sooner did the Apostles begin to preach *Christ's* Resurrection, but they appeared to be the most zealous Adversaries of the Gospel. For they saw, that if *Christ's* Resurrection from the dead was believed to be true, it would be a sensible Proof of the Resurrection and a future State. Thus we are told, *Acts* iv. 1, 2. That the *Sadducees* came upon the Apostles, being grieved that they taught the People, and preached thro' *Jesus* the Resurrection from the dead. And again, *ch. v. 17*. That the *Sect* of the *Sadducees* being filled with Indignation laid Hands on the Apostles, and put them in Prison. It was not therefore without Reason that the Apostle *Paul* declared, that he was called in Question concerning the Hope and Resurrection of the dead, since this was really one chief Thing, tho' not the only one, that stirred up the Malice and Spite of his Enemies, especially of the *Sadducees*. Several of whom

whom he saw in the Council, and who were his chiefest and most implacable Adversaries, Acts xxiii. 6, 7, 8.

C H A P. XV.

The Author's Pretence that the Apocalypse is most properly the Christian Revelation, and that it is there that we are principally to look for the Doctrines of Christianity, considered. There is nothing in that Book to countenance the Worship of Angels, Invocation of Saints, or Prayers for the dead. Salvation is not there confined to the Jews only. His Account of the fifth Monarchy which he pretends is foretold in that Book, shewn to be false and absurd. The Attempt he makes against the whole Canon of the New Testament, under Pretence that it was corrupted and interpolated by the Jews, and that Christ's own Disciples reported Doctrines and Facts according to their own false Notions and Prejudices, examined and disproved.

NOTHING can be more evident than that our Author makes use of the Term, *Christian Jew*, with a Design to expose our Saviour and his Apostles, and the whole New Testament. And the more effectually to answer that Design he is pleased to ascribe several Sentiments to the *Christian Jews*, and as making up Part of what he calls the *Jewish Gospel*, which he thinks he can prove to be absurd and false, and some of which really are so. And for a Proof that these were their Doctrines, he refers us not to the Gospels or to the Epistles written by the Apostles of our Lord, but to the Apocalypse which he represents as a System of *Jewish Christianity*. In hopes, I suppose, to take Advantage from the obscure and figurative Style of that Book. He thinks Sir Isaac Newton has proved it to be a genuine Work

Work of St. John, and that it was written in Nero's Time, two or three Years before the Destruction of Jerusalem, p. 364. And he tell us, that this Book is most properly the Christian Revelation, or the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which is the very Title of that Book: whereas no other Book of the New Testament assumes or claims any such Character, p. 369. But it is evident from the express Declaration of the Book itself, that it was not so properly and immediately designed to be a Revelation of Doctrines, as to be a Revelation of future Events. It is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ to shew unto his Servants the Things which must shortly come to pass, ch. i. 1: And again, it is called this Prophecy, ch. xxii. 19. It is therefore a poor trifling Observation, that no other Book of the New Testament has the Word Revelation of Jesus Christ in the Title of it. If he could prove that no other Book of the New Testament was given by Inspiration of God (as the Apostle Paul tells us all Scripture is) or was designed to instruct us in the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, this would be something to his Purpose. And he shews his good Will this Way, by observing, that the Epistles and Gospels contain nothing but historical Accounts of Facts, or practical Rules and Exhortations, &c. But nothing can be more manifest to any one that ever read those Writings, than that they abound with Instructions in Point of Doctrine. And from these Writings we should have a full Account of the Doctrines of Christianity, tho' no such Book as the Apocalypse had been ever written at all. I am satisfied that it is a truly inspired Book, and of considerable Use: But the Authority of the Christian Revelation, and the Discovery of its Doctrines, doth not at all peculiarly depend upon that Book: tho' all that is there said occasionally concerning any of the Christian Doctrines, is agreeable to what is delivered in the other Books of the New Testament.

But let us examine the Account he pretends to give of the Doctrines of that Book. First he tells us, that *the Christian Jews soon fell into gross Idolatry, and set up a great Number of Mediators and Intercessors with God instead of one.* And this he pretends to prove from the *Apocalypse*, p. 364, 365. and again p. 372. That the *mediatorial Worship of Saints and Angels, and Prayers for the dead, are all plainly founded in this Book.* To shew that the Angels are there represented as Mediators between God and us, he observes, that the *twenty four Elders, or principal Angels which stood before the Throne, are represented as having golden Censers in their Hands full of Incense, which is the Prayers of the Saints.* But what if the four and twenty Elders be only the Representatives of the Christian Church, and the Harps and Vials full of Odours, be only designed to be a Representation, in the figurative Style of Prophecy, of the Worship paid to God in the Church, which is Sir *Isaac Newton's* Interpretation, then the Author's Inference from it falls to the Ground. And that the Elders there mentioned are not to be understood, as he would have it, of the *principal Angels*, is manifest, both because the Angels are plainly distinguished from the Elders, *Rev. v. II. and vii. II.* and because those Elders are represented, in their Song to the Lamb, as blessing him for having *redeemed them unto God by his Blood out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.* Ch. v. 9, 10.

There is another Passage in that Book, tho' not mentioned by this Writer, that seems at first view much more to his Purpose than that which he produces, *viz. that concerning the Angel which stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer, to whom was given much Incense, that he should offer it with the Prayers of all Saints; and that the Smoke of the Incense, which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's Hand,*

Rev.

Rev. viii. 3, 4. But the Word *Angel* admits of so many Senses in that Book, that no Argument can be drawn from it. The Bishops or Ministers of the Churches are called the *Angels* of the Churches. An *Angel* is represented as having the *everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, to every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue, and People*, Ch. xiv. 6, 7. Where by the *Angel* is meant all those persons that were employed to preach the Gospel, and to call Men to the true Worship of God. And as Heaven, and the Temple, and Altar there, often signify, in this Prophecy, the visible Christian Church on Earth, and the Worship there performed; so the *Angel standing at the Altar, having a golden Censer, and offering up the Prayers of the Saints upon the golden Altar, with much Incense*, may be designed to signify no more than this, that the Ministers of the Christian Church offered up to God their own Prayers and those of the People in solemn Acts of publick Worship, and that those Prayers found a gracious Acceptance with God. Thus when the Psalmist saith, *Psal. cxli. 2. Let my Prayer be set forth before thee as Incense*, it signifies no more than if he had said, Let my Prayers be favourably accepted; there is nothing in this Interpretation, but what is agreeable to the Style of this Book. But if we should suppose that the *Angel* here is spoken of in Allusion to the High Priest under the Law on the Day of Expiation, then it is the Lord *Jesus Christ* that is here represented by the *Angel*, as being the only *High Priest* of the Christian Church in the constant Language of the New Testament. And his being here called an *Angel* is no Objection against this, since he is represented under a Variety of Images in this Book. And since this Author grants *St. John* to have been the Author of the *Apocalypse*, it is but reasonable that the figurative Language of this Book should be understood in a conformity to

the declared Sentiments of this great Apostle. Now we find him elsewhere plainly signifying, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only *Advocate with the Father*, as well as the only *Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 *Job. xi. 1, 2.* And in his Gospel he represents our Saviour as encouraging his Disciples to *ask the Father in his Name*, as the only Mediator through whom their Prayers would be accepted. *John xiv. 6, 13. xvi. 23, 26.* To which it may be added, that this very Book of the Revelation contains as express a Declaration *against the Worship of Angels*, as any is to be found in the whole Scripture. See *Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 9.* where the Angel twice forbids *John* to worship him. Our Author endeavours to evade this, by saying, that *the Worship of Angels was then only mediatorial, and not immediate and direct*; and therefore the Angel refused *St. John's immediate direct Adoration*, when he was going to pay it him. But certainly *St. John* never intended to worship the Angel as the supreme God, or as the Lamb; it was only an inferior Worship he intended to render him. In the Transports of his Gratitude and Respect he threw himself at his Feet, and was for paying him an inferior religious Homage; and yet even this the Angel would not allow, but expressly forbid it, as *St. Peter* had done in a like Case to *Cornelius*, to shew how far we should be from doing any thing that looks like rendering a religious Worship to inferior Beings; adding a Reason for it, because he was his *Fellow-Servant*, a Servant of God and of *Jesus Christ* as well as he.

What our Author offers to prove, that this Book teacheth *the Invocation of Saints at their Tombs*, and *Prayers for the dead*, hath not so much as the Shadow of an Argument. He observes, that *St. John* saw the Souls of them that had been slain for the Word of God, crying out, *how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Chap. vi. 9, 10. From

From whence he argues, that if *the departed Saints and Martyrs are still in such a State of earnest Desire and Expectation of a compleat Deliverance, we ought surely to pray for them as they do for us, and even pray to them, or request their Prayers and Intercessions with God for us, whenever we apprehend them present.* Pag. 366. Let us grant that the Saints above, or Church triumphant, do pray to God in behalf of the Church militant on Earth, for putting a Stop to persecuting Rage and Violence, and for promoting the Interests of his Kingdom, of Piety, Righteousness, and Charity among Men; there is nothing in this but what may well be supposed, nor did any understanding Protestant ever deny it. But says he, *then we ought to pray for them as they do for us:* And if by praying for them be meant no more than our praying that the Time may be hastened when their and our Felicity and Glory shall be completed at the Resurrection, when the whole general Assembly and Church of the First-born shall be fully accomplished and glorified: such a Communion as this between that part of the Church and Family of God which is yet *militant* on Earth, and that part of it which is *triumphant* above, they concerned for us, and earnestly desiring our Happiness and Welfare, and we rejoicing in their present Glory, and desiring the Completion of it, may justly be admitted, and is full of Consolation. But then he adds, that *we ought also to pray to them, or request their Prayers and Intercessions with God for us, whenever we apprehend them present.* Our Author wisely adds this. For this shews the Impropriety of applying our selves to any particular Saints departed, because we cannot know that they are present with us; and to pray to them as if they were every where present, would be an ascribing to them the peculiar Perfections of God; Or, if they were present, it would be improper for us to bow down before them with all the Marks of religious

religious Homage and Reverence, as is done in the Church of Rome: for this we find *John* was not suffered to do to the Angel when really present.

But he tells us, p. 367. That *the great and dangerous part of the Scheme* with regard to these primitive Christian Jews was, that *they confined Salvation to themselves*; that it is evident the Author of this Book confines Salvation to the Jews only. For when the Saints came to be marked and entered into the Book of Life, there are none marked and entered but Jews only, twelve Thousand out of every Tribe; and no Gentile was to be saved, &c. p. 372. But no Argument can be drawn from the calling those that were sealed by the Names of the Tribes of *Israel*; since, agreeably to the prophetick Style, by *Israel* is signified the Christian Church, as in this very Book by *Babylon* is signified *Rome*; because as *Babylon* was the great persecuting Power under the Old Testament, so *Rome* should be the great Persecutor of the Church under the New. So the false Seducers to Idolatry are called by the Name of *Jezabel*, Chap. xi. 20. and *Rome* is called *Sodom*, and *Egypt* the great City where our Lord was crucified, Chap. ii. 8. And in the same Figure the Church is called *Jerusalem* and the Holy City; as it is also by *St. Paul*, *Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 22.* And that it could not be the Intention of *St. John*, in the Expressions produced by this Writer, to confine Salvation to the Jews only, is evident, not only because there are as plain Declarations, as any in the whole New Testament, to be found in his Writings, concerning *Christ's* being the Saviour of the World, or of all Mankind; for which see the Passages I had Occasion to cite before, *John. iii. 16. x. 16. xi. 52. 1 John ii. 2.* But because no Expressions can be stronger than those that are used in this very Book, to signify that some of all Nations should be saved; I shall only produce one Passage to this Purpose, which is very clear and express.

It

It is in Chap. vii. 9. where speaking of the Happiness of the Saints, he represents them as a *great Multitude, which no Man could number, of all Nations and Kindreds, and People and Tongues*; and then goes on to describe their blessed State. It is observable that this is immediately said after the Account that is given of the 144000 that were sealed out of all the *Tribes of Israel*. Now if we should suppose the *great Multitude* of Saints mentioned Ver. 9. to be different from the 144000 sealed ones, then even allowing the Author's own Supposition, that those were to be understood literally of *Jewish Converts*, it would prove, that a great Number of all *Nations* would be saved besides them. But if this *great Multitude* of Saints of all Nations, &c. mentioned Ver. 9. be supposed to be the very same Persons that are represented before, as having been sealed out of all the *Tribes of Israel*, then this shews, that by the *Tribes of Israel* we are there to understand the *Christian Church* of all Nations, mystically called *Israel*, in the prophetic Style. Our Author indeed pretends, that by *all Nations and Kindreds*, &c. we are only to understand the *Jews* gathered out of all Nations. And at that rate, whatever Expressions had been used to signify that the Gospel Salvation should extend to all Nations, he might still have pretended that it was to be understood only of the *Jews*. But whereas this Phrase of *People and Kindreds, and Tongues and Nations*, is frequently used in this Book, it never once signifies the *Jews* of all Nations, as will appear to any one that will consult the Passages where this Phrase is used. Ch. xi. 9. xii. 8. xiii. 3, 7. xiv. 6, 7, 8. xvii. 15.

The Account our Author pretends to give of the *fifth Monarchy* foretold in the Book of the Revelation, that was *immediately to succeed the Destruction of the fourth or Roman Monarchy*, which was to happen in that very Age, is entirely misrepresented.

There

There is nothing in this Book that looks like erecting a Monarchy or Empire of the *Jews* above all other Nations, in which *they were to glut their Revenge upon the Gentile World*, which is the *Idea* he gives of that fifth Monarchy, as he calls it. Those that are described as *Saints* in this Book, and that shall be Partakers of the Happiness and Kingdom there described, are represented to be those of all Nations that *keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus*, Rev. xiv. 12. and that suffered *for the Word of God, and the Testimony of Jesus*, Ch. xx. 4. With regard to the *New Jerusalem*, there described, the Nations [*τὰ ἔθνη*, a Word commonly used to signify the Gentiles] of *them that are saved*, are represented as *walking in it*. Ch. xxi. 24. And the *Leaves of the Tree of Life* are said to be *for the healing of the Nations*, Ch. xxii. 3. And no *Jew* would ever have made use of such Expressions to signify that the *Jews* only should share in the Benefits of that glorious and happy State.

Our Author would have all that is said in the *Apocalypse* concerning the *New Jerusalem*, to be understood literally of a real City that was *to come down from Heaven*, and to be *built without Hands*, 12000 Furlongs, or 1500 Miles square, &c. and that *all the Gentiles* should be forced to bring *all their Riches into it, as Contributions and Marks of Homage to the Jewish Messiah*, who was to reign there a *thousand Years*. And he might as justly take every thing that is said in the whole Book in a strict literal Sense. But by such an Attempt, instead of exposing the Book of the *Revelation*, which is undoubtedly his Design, he would effectually expose his own Absurdity. It is manifest to every one that considers the figurative Style that is every where preserved throughout this Book, that this Description of the *New Jerusalem* is only designed to be a figurative Representation of a very glorious and happy State, of which good Men should be

Partakers, and the Felicity and Glory of which is described by Images drawn from those Things that are usually accounted the most splendid and magnificent here on Earth; and yet at the same time it is intimated, that the Happiness and Glory of it shall be heavenly and spiritual, chiefly consisting in God's gracious Presence, and in the Purity and Holiness of the blessed Inhabitants, and the Manifestations of the Divine Love and Favour towards them. See *Rev. xxi. 3, 4, &c.*

And whereas this Writer, in order to shew that the Prophecy of this Book is false, would have it, that all the Events there foretold are represented as Things that were immediately to be accomplished in that very Age, *because it is said to be a Revelation of Things which were shortly to come to pass*: It is evident from the Book itself, that the Intention of this could not be to signify that all the Events there prophesied of were shortly to come to pass: for among other things there prophesied of is the final Judgment, when *all the Dead, small and great, shall stand before God*, and be judged according to their Works, *Rev. xxii. 12.* And this is represented there, as not to happen till the thousand Years of Christ's Reign on Earth were past. So that it is plain, that when it is said to be a Revelation of Things *shortly* to come to pass, it can only be intended to signify, that the Things there prophesied of were to *begin* immediately to be accomplished. These Expressions shew where the Fulfilment of that Prophecy should begin, not where it should end. And accordingly it contains a Series of Events to begin from that Time, and to end with the general Judgment.

It would carry me too far, to enter into the *Apocalyptic* Computations. Any one who would see them well handled, may, amongst others, consult a good Book lately published by Mr. Lowman*. But whereas this Writer, in order to shew that the

* *Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelations, 4to.*

1260 Days there mentioned are to be understood of so many natural Days, pretends, that there is no Foundation in Scripture, for taking a Day for a Year, in the Interpretation of those Prophecies; and that the Jews had no such Computation as putting a Day for a Year, tho' they had annual Weeks. And therefore when Weeks are mentioned, as in the famous Prophecy of Daniel, it may signify Weeks of Years, as well as Weeks of Days: I would only observe, that if Weeks, which in the proper literal Signification signifies seven Days, may be understood to signify seven Years; I see no Reason in the World, why a Day may not be put for a Year. For if it be said, a Day in itself signifies a natural Day, and nothing else, so a Week in itself signifies seven Days, and nothing else, and is always so understood in Scripture, when put alone without the Addition of Years, except in the Style of Prophecy. And if in that Style, by the Author's own Acknowledgment, a Week, which properly signifies seven Days, may be put for seven Years, tho' it is not in the Prophecy itself expressly declared to be a Week of Years; then in the same Style a Day may be put for a Year. And that it must be understood so in the Prophecy of the *Apocalypse* is, I think, manifest by internal Arguments drawn from the Prophecy itself. For any one that carefully considers what is represented as happening in that *twelve hundred and sixty Days*, or forty and two Months, will easily be convinced, that three Years and an half is too small a Period for so many and great Events, which take up near one half of the whole Prophecy †. Nor do I see, upon this Supposition, where is the Necessity of speaking so often of the *Faith and Patience of the Saints*, if the persecuted State of the Church were to be of such a short Duration.

It is not to be wondred at, that there is a considerable Obscurity with regard to many Circum-

† See Lowman on the Revelation, p. 106.

stances of the *Prophecies* [in that Book, and particularly as to the precise Time of the *Dates* of the Events. Several Reasons might be offered to shew that it was not proper that they should be more distinctly marked out: but yet there is such a plain Description of an idolatrous and persecuting Power that was to arise in the Church; the Seat where that Power was to be fixed is so plainly pointed out, viz. *Rome*, and that it was to be under a different *Form* of Government in the *Roman* Empire from that which subsisted in St. *John's* time, and after the Rise of *ten* Kingdoms into which that Empire was to be divided, which did not happen till many hundred Years after this Prophecy: the Arts of Seduction and Deceit that should be made use of, the general spreading of the Apostacy, and the grievous Sufferings to which the faithful few should be exposed, are so distinctly and strongly described: and we have seen all this so wonderfully accomplished by a Power the most strange that ever was in the World, and in which all these Characters are to be found, that it is no small Confirmation of the divine Authority of this Prophecy. And it is also foretold that after the *Destruction* of this Power, there shall be a *glorious* State of the Church, a State of universal Purity and Peace, to continue a *thousand* Years: our Author may call this a *fifth* Monarchy if he pleases, but let him prove that there is any thing in this unbecoming the Wisdom and Goodness of God. The Prospects of it cannot but be very refreshing to every good Man that hath any Zeal for the Glory of God, or for the Good of Mankind, and for the Interests of true Religion and Righteousness in the World.

But the Author objects that this fifth Monarchy was to be founded in *Blood and Destruction* as the *four* Monarchies before had been successively founded, p. 367. or as he expresseth it, p. 372. that not one *Gentile* was to be saved: they were all to be given up

to the Sword, Plague, and Famine; or such Judgments by which God had determined to destroy the fourth to make way for the fifth Monarchy, which looks very unlike converting the whole World by Argument and Reason, and by the *Motives and Inducements of Beneficence and Love, under a Kingdom or State of Government, that must depend upon inward Conviction and free Choice.* His Insinuations that the Jews only were to be Partakers of the Benefits of this Kingdom have been already sufficiently exposed: but it will be easily allowed, that it is plainly signified in this Book that God after having long born with them, would inflict severe Judgments on his obstinate Enemies, who had persecuted his faithful Servants with so much Cruelty and Rage, and had seduced the Nations by their wicked Arts, and propagated Iniquity, Vice, and Idolatry. This Writer here seems to think it is a Breach of *Liberty of Conscience* for God himself to inflict Plague, Famine, &c. upon the wicked Opposers of his Authority and Laws: And for ought I know, he may think it a Breach of Liberty, and inconsistent with God's governing his Creatures by Love, to punish the wicked at all either in this World or in the next. But tho' not to punish the Wicked might seem to be a Lenity and Indulgence to them, yet which is far worse, it would be a Cruelty to Men. It would be a subverting the Order and Welfare of the moral World, and a suffering Vice and Wickedness to ravage without Controul, which would be absolutely inconsistent with a wise and good Government. I would fain know of this benevolent Author who is afraid of God's punishing the obstinately Wicked, because this *would be very unlike converting the World by Inducements of Beneficence and Love, under a Kingdom that must depend upon inward Conviction and free Choice*; I would know of him what Room there would be for Men's acting in Religion upon in-

ward Conviction and free Choice, if God should always suffer persecuting Powers to prevail, and set no Bounds to their Rage. How the punishing and destroying such Powers, or which is the same Thing, putting a stop to Tyranny and Persecution, is the Way to hinder free Choice, he would do well to explain. On the contrary it is evident that the removing such idolatrous persecuting Powers, is necessary in the Nature of Things, to make way for such a happy State of Government where Truth and Love and Benevolence must reign.

Thus I have considered our Author's Objections against the *Apocalypse*, one of the sacred Books of the New Testament. But he is not content with this. He endeavours as far as in him lyes to destroy the Authority of the whole *Canon* of the New Testament. He represents it as so full of Corruptions and Interpolations that it is not "at all to be depended upon: that the Christian *Jews* had the revising and publishing that *Canon* in their own Hands, and altered it as they pleased in that very Age: and that as they left it, and as it now stands, it is a System of *Christian Judaism*, a Jumble of two inconsistent Religions; yea that *Christ's* own Disciples reported every Thing that *Jesus* did or said according to their own Prejudices, and are therefore not to be depended on for a just Account either of Doctrines or Facts," see p. 440, 441.

I shall not repeat what I have elsewhere offered to shew that never were there more unexceptionable Witnesses than the *Apostles*, and that the New Testament Writings have all the Marks of genuine Purity and Integrity that any Writings can have, and that it was not in the Power of any Persons if they had been willing to have introduced a general Corruption into those Writings * either with regard

* See Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation, Vol. 2. Chap. 2, and 5.

to the Doctrines or Facts. I shall only observe at present, that the Supposition this Writer makes of their being corrupted by the *Jews*, those very *Jews* who he tells us would have crucified a thousand *Messiahs*, rather than take in the *Gentiles* as Partakers in the Kingdom with the primitive elect People of God; and who at last being disappointed in *Jesus* set up another *Messiah* one *Barchochab*, p. 374, 440. is the wildest the most extravagant Supposition in the World. For not to urge, that it was not in their Power to have corrupted the original sacred Writings of the New Testament which were immediately dispersed far and wide among the *Gentile Churches*, we have a manifest Proof in Fact that they did not interpolate and corrupt them in Favour of their own *Jewish* Notions and Prejudices, because none of those which this Writer represents as their Notions and Doctrines, and as making up what he calls a *Jewish Gospel*, such as the Doctrines concerning *Christ's* being only a temporal *Messiah*, and national Deliverer of the *Jews*, concerning the Observation of the Law of *Moses* as absolutely necessary to Justification and Acceptance with God; concerning the worshipping of *Angels*, and setting up many *Mediators* and *Intercessors* instead of one, concerning the confining Salvation to the *Jews* only, and raising them to a Height of Power and Dominion over all Nations, that they might be thoroughly revenged on the *Gentile World*; I say, none of those Doctrines are to be found in the New Testament Writings. And to imagine that the Christian *Jews*, as he calls them, should interpolate and corrupt the New Testament Writings in order to accommodate them to their own Notions and Prejudices, and yet should leave the entire Scheme of Religion there laid down quite contrary to those Notions and Prejudices, and neither alter those Passages that are most inconsistent with those Notions, nor insert any Passages in Favour of them,

them, is the most absurd and unaccountable Supposition that ever was made.

But our Author is pleased to instance in some Things which he looks upon to be Proofs of such Interpolations and Corruptions. Such he would have those Passages to be that relate to the *Divinity* of our Saviour; but he would do well to tell us what Inducements the Christian *Jews* could have to foist in such Interpolations. The *Ebionites*, *Cerinthians*, and others who called themselves Christians, and yet urged the Necessity of the Observation of the Law of *Moses*, would never have inserted those Passages, but rather the contrary, since they did not acknowledge our Lord's Divinity. And besides, it is evident, that no part of the New Testament affords stronger Passages to this Purpose than are to be found in the Writings of St. *Paul*. But certainly if we should suppose that the *Christian Jews* had it in their Power to have corrupted his *Epistles* (which is a most absurd Supposition) it would have appeared by their altering or corrupting some of the Passages that seem to be strongest against the Obligation of the Law of *Moses*, and that relate to the *Gentiles* being taken in as *Fellow-Heirs* and Members of the same Body: But the whole Frame of his *Epistles* bears the plain Characters of genuine Purity and Integrity. Another Instance he brings is, that in favour of their old national Prejudices, Christ's own Disciples made him a false Prophet, they made him prophesy of the End of the World, and of his second coming to Judgment, as a Thing very shortly to happen during that present Generation, p. 440. And he observes farther, that they expected Christ's second coming in that very Age or Generation, with all the Powers of Heaven to restore the Kingdom to the House of David, in an everlasting Succession of Power and Dominion over all Nations to the End of the World, p. 441. But no where do any of the Apostles assign the precise Time

of Christ's coming to the general Judgment; on the contrary, they plainly let us know that the exact Time of it was not revealed to them. The coming they speak of, as foretold by our Lord to happen in that very Age, is his coming not to *restore the Kingdom to the House of David* in the Jewish Sense, and to raise the Jews to a *Height of Power and Dominion over all Nations*, as this Writer is pleased to represent it; but to *destroy Jerusalem*, and to put an utter End to that State and Polity, and inflict the most dreadful Punishment and Desolation upon them that ever was inflicted in any Age, or upon any Nation. And this is so far from making *Christ* a false Prophet, that it furnisheth a glorious *Proof* among many others that might be produced of his divine Mission. And it is remarkable, that tho' they assure us that our Lord so clearly foretold the utter Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, yet when they give us an Account of this, they never add the least hint of his foretelling that the Kingdom should be restored to the *Jews*, and that they should be fully revenged on the *Gentiles*, which one should think they would have done if they had interpolated these Predictions in favour of their own national Prejudices.

Our Author farther pretends that *Christ's* Disciples ascribed several Miracles to him, in *which there could have been only an Exertion of Power without Wisdom or Goodness*, but as he does not condescend to mention them, I need not take any particular Notice of this Insinuation. I shall only observe, that the Miracles they relate are Things which they themselves heard and saw, yea which were done in open View of Multitudes, and even of their most watchful and malicious Enemies. And the Accounts were published in the very Age in which those Facts were said to be done, and when it would have been the easiest Thing in the World to have

detected

detected and contradicted them if they had not been true. And indeed, never were there, all Things considered, more credible Witnesses. They appeared by their whole Conduct to be Men of great Probity and Simplicity. The Doctrine they preached, and which was confirmed by those Miracles, was contrary to all their most rooted and favoured Prejudices, and former Notions of Things. They themselves received that Doctrine on the Credit of the Facts they relate, and to which they were Witnesses. And they persevered in their Accounts of those Facts, and in their Profession of that Doctrine, with an unparallel'd Constancy, and even with a wonderful Satisfaction and Joy of Mind, under the most grievous Sufferings, and at length sealed their Testimony with their Blood. Nor is it conceivable to any that impartially considers these Things, and the *pure and self-denying* Scheme of Religion they taught, upon what other Principles they could proceed in all this, than what they themselves professed, a Regard to the Glory of God, and to the Good of Mankind, and an earnest Desire of promoting true Religion, Piety, and Virtue in the World, together with the Hopes of a glorious Reward and Happiness in a future State. And the being acted by these Principles is absolutely inconsistent with their being Impostors and Deceivers; who put a deliberate solemn Cheat upon Mankind in the Name of God, and witnessed to Facts which they themselves knew to be false. And our Author himself after putting a Case which pretty exactly answers to that of the *Apostles*, seems to acknowledge, that it is very *probable that Men qualified and acting as is here supposed could have no Design to deceive us.* See p. 90—93.

C H A P. XVI.

The Moral Philosopher sets up for rectifying the Errors of Christians with regard to some of the particular Doctrines of Christianity. His Objections against the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction considered. There is nothing in it contrary to Justice. The Fullness of the Satisfaction not inconsistent with a free Pardon. It doth not rob God of the Glory of his Mercy, and give the whole Praise to Christ. The Pretence that Christ's Satisfaction is needless because Repentance alone is sufficient without it, examined. It doth not destroy the Necessity of personal Repentance and Obedience, but establisheth it. Christ's Prayer to the Father that the Cup might pass from him not inconsistent with the Notion of his dying for the Sins of the World. The Author's Assertion that there was no such thing as vicarious Sacrifices under the Law of Moses; and the Way he takes to account for Christ's being called a Propitiation, examined. The Representation he makes of the Gospel Doctrine of Pardon upon Repentance. His Absurdity and Inconsistency in this shewn. His Attempt against the positive Precepts of Christianity, considered. The Arguments he draws from the Differences among Christians, to prove that none of the Doctrines of revealed Religion are of any Certainty or Use to Mankind, shewn to be vain and inconclusive. His Encomium on Moral Philosophy, The Conclusion.

I HAVE now gone thro' the several Objections of our pretended Moral Philosopher as far as they affect the Authority of the Holy Scriptures in general, whether of the Old Testament or of the New. It doth not properly come within my Design to enter upon the Consideration of the particular

particular Doctrines of Christianity, especially those that are controverted among Christians. I might therefore entirely pass by those Parts of our Author's Book, where he pretends to set up for rectifying the Errors and Mistakes that have obtained among Christians with regard to some of the Doctrines of the Gospel. He is certainly a very unfit Person to bring Christians to the true original *Christianity*, and to the Purity of Doctrine as laid down in the New Testament, who does all he can to subvert and destroy the Authority of those sacred Writings. There is no one Doctrine against which he exerts himself with so much Force and Vigour, as that of Christ's Satisfaction. He is pleased on this Occasion to give us a Specimen of his Sermonizing Faculty, as *a Sample how the Clergy ought to preach, and what Doctrines they are to instruct us in as from Christ and the Apostles.* And the Discourse he entertaineth us with on this Subject lasts, with Digressions, for about a hundred Pages together. If its Confusion and Tedioufness were its principal Faults, I should not have endeavoured to disturb the good Opinion he seems to have of his own Performance, but the peculiar Air of Insolence and Scorn with which he treateth a Doctrine that hath been generally thought by *Christians* to be plainly founded in the New Testament, and the bitter Reproach he poureth forth upon it, deserves some Animadversion. He not only representeth it as a most *absurd and irrational Doctrine* but as *the strong Hold of Sin and Satan in the Christian World*, p. 146. and thinks he has said enough to subvert and destroy this Hypothesis under all the *Appearances and Constructions of it among our several Schematists and Faith-mongers*, p. 444. I shall therefore take so much Notice of what he hath advanced on this Head as may suffice to shew that there is no Occasion for all this Boasting and Confidence, and that this Doctrine may still stand its Ground

Ground notwithstanding the Attacks of this formidable Writer.

The true Notion of Christ's *Satisfaction* or Christ dying for our Sin, in general, is this, "That it is
" a Provision made by the Wisdom of God to
" dispense his Grace and Favour towards guilty
" Creatures in such a Way as doth, at the same
" time, secure the Majesty of his Government with
" the Authority of his Law, and shew forth his Justice and Purity." And I believe there is scarce any Man but will own that if such a Way can be found out, it is better and more becoming the wise and righteous Governor of the World, than it would be to pardon and restore Sinners absolutely to favour in a Way of meer *Prerogative*, without any such Provision for maintaining the Rights of his Government, and vindicating the Honour and Authority of his Laws. The *Gospel* Revelation exhibiteth very extraordinary Displays of the Divine Grace and Mercy towards Sinners of the human Race. It not only containeth a full and free Offer of the Pardon of all our Sins, how great and heinous soever, upon our Repentance and Amendment, but it promiseth a compleat Felicity of Body and Soul to continue to all Eternity, as the Reward of our imperfect Obedience in this State of Trial; a Reward transcending what we could have pretended to have merited, if we had never sinned at all. But at the same time we are there informed that all these inestimable Blessings, Pardon, and Peace, and eternal Life, are only conferred upon us thro' *Jesus Christ*, as the great appointed *Mediator*, who according to the Father's Will took upon him our Nature, and gave himself up to the most grievous Sufferings, and to Death itself, to make *Atonement* for our Sins, and to obtain eternal *Redemption* for us. And nothing can furnish a more awful and affecting Proof of God's righteous Abhorrence of Sin, and the steady Regard he hath to the

the Majesty of his Government, and the Authority of his Laws, than that when his infinite Grace and Mercy inclined and determined him to pardon, and restore his offending Creatures, and raise them to the highest Felicity upon their Repentance, and sincere tho' imperfect Obedience, he would not do it upon any less Consideration than this, that his own Son should *give himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice for our Sins*; and that he would not allow such guilty Creatures as we are an immediate Access to him in our own Names, but only thro' the Mediation and Intercession of that great Redeemer, who suffered and died for us, the *Just for the Unjust*, that he might bring us unto God. This gives the highest possible Weight to the New Covenant. And when the Blessings of it are dispensed in this Method, it hath a manifest Tendency to prevent our abusing those glorious Displays of his Goodness and Mercy that are made to us in the Gospel. For since God would not pardon and restore even *penitent* Sinners to his Favour without so extraordinary an Expedient for vindicating the Authority of his Government and Laws, this shews that if we reject the Grace of the Covenant, and the Terms upon which the Benefits of it are now offered to us, we have no farther Favour or Mercy to hope for: *There remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin* (for we cannot expect another Sacrifice equal to that which we have rejected) *but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, &c.* So that God hath taken care to manifest his *restoral* Justice and Hatred against Sin, even in the very Methods of our Reconciliation. And we are taught in the Gospel still to have the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ in View, whilst we are receiving the greatest Mercies and Benefits from God, that we may not forget his Justice and Purity whilst we experience his rich Grace and Mercy. The *Objections* of our Moral Philosopher against the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction are of various Kinds.

Kinds. I shall take Notice of the principal of them, and those upon which he seemeth to lay the greatest Stress.

“That God should punish the Innocent for the Guilty (saith he) and spare the Guilty for this very Reason, because an innocent Person has suffered what they ought to have suffered, is a strange Doctrine: but stranger still that such a Subversion of all moral Government, and inverting the Course of all rectoral Justice, should be necessary to satisfy that very Justice,” p. 148. He has this over again, p. 222. where he calls it by way of Ridicule, a *most amazing and stupendous Projection, beyond the Comprehension of Men and Angels.*

But doth not this Writer himself allow that Christ was perfectly pure and innocent in himself; and yet that by the Will of the Father he was subjected to the most grievous Sufferings, and was treated as if he had been a Sinner, and thereby as it were put himself in the Place of Sinners? p. 225. and that all this was for our Benefit? From whence it followeth, that it was not unsuitable to the Divine Justice, to inflict grievous Sufferings on a Person perfectly pure and innocent, for the Sake and Benefit of guilty sinful Creatures, and with a View to promote their Welfare and Happiness. And if this be allowed, I cannot see what Foundation there is for the mighty Clamours that are raised against the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction on this Head, under Pretence that it supposeth an innocent Person to suffer for the Guilty. If it be said, that tho' Christ suffered for our Good, he did not suffer in the Stead of Sinners, or as a *Punishment* for their Sins; I cannot see why it should be thought unjust in God to lay Sufferings upon Christ considered as an innocent Person who had voluntarily undertaken to suffer instead of the Guilty, that they might be pardoned and saved, when it is not thought unjust to lay the same Sufferings upon him, tho' perfectly innocent

innocent without any such Consideration. Our Author owns that *Christ* tho' innocent, suffered, but he will not allow that his Sufferings were *penal*, as if the calling them *Afflictions* rather than Punishments altered the Nature of them, or made them to be less grievous and painful to the suffering Person. It is true, that the charging an innocent Person with Crimes which he was not guilty of, and then compelling him against his own Consent to suffer for the Crimes of others, would both be cruel and unjust in the Person inflicting that Punishment; and would render the Sufferings of the Person thus punished much more grievous than if he had suffered the same Evils without any such Consideration, but merely as Calamities that had befallen him. But if we should suppose an innocent Person to suffer for the Faults of others, the Punishment of which he had from a noble Principle of Love and Kindness to the guilty Persons *taken* upon himself, that the Offenders might be spared and freed from Punishment, this certainly would not render the Evils and Sufferings he endured on that Account, more grievous or afflictive to him, than if he had suffered the same Evils merely as Calamities, or as a Trial and Exercise of his Patience and Submission without any such view at all. Yea his Sufferings may be justly supposed to be less grievous and afflictive to him on that Supposition, than otherwise they would be, because of the happy *Effects* they would produce for the Benefit of others, as well as because on this Supposition they were what the Person himself had *freely* undertaken for valuable Ends.

But still it will be urged, that the Suffering of such an innocent Person for the guilty could not be properly a Satisfaction to *Justice*. To which I answer, That if Justice were merely an Appetite of *Revenge* against the particular Person that had offended, then it could not be satisfied but by his
personal

personal Punishment, and in no Case could the Punishment of another be accepted for him. But the Justice of God is only a wise and steady *Will* of vindicating and preserving the Honour and Authority of his Laws and Government, an unalterable Resolution to act as becomes the wise and righteous Governor of the World, for the maintaining of Order and the universal Good, by keeping up by all proper Methods an Awe of his Authority, an Abhorrence of Sin, and a Fear of offending him in the Minds of his Creatures. And if the dispensing Pardon and Salvation to guilty Creatures, thro' Christ's suffering and dying for our Sins, answers these great and valuable Ends, it satisfies his Justice in the properest Sense in which that Phrase can be used with regard to the Deity.

The Reason of inflicting Punishments in general is not merely to exercise Revenge upon the guilty Person, or to take Pleasure in his Pain or Misery, but to *vindicate* the Authority of the Laws, to *deter* Persons from transgressing them, and to *preserve* Order and good Government in the World: And as these Ends cannot ordinarily be answered but by the *personal* Punishment of the Offender himself, therefore this is ordinarily necessary. But if a Case may happen in which these Ends may be answered by *another* Person's interposing to suffer instead of the Guilty, no Reason in the Nature of Things can be produced to prove that in such a Case such a Substitution might not be accepted, or that it would be unjust in that Case to lay upon such a Person, tho' in himself innocent, the Punishment or Sufferings which he voluntarily took upon him to endure for the Sake of the Guilty. And this would be beyond all reasonable Exception, if it could be so ordered as to tend upon the whole to the Glory and Advantage even of the *suffering* Person himself, by recompensing so noble and generous an Act of Kindness and Benevolence; and if at the same time the

Authority of the Government be in this way effectually manifested and display'd, and the Majesty of the Laws vindicated, and the main Ends of Punishment obtained. Now all these Conditions manifestly concur in the Case of our Lord Jesus Christ's suffering for Sinners. For in this Method as the greatest *Mercy* is shewn to the Sinners themselves who obtain the Pardon of their Sins, and are raised to the highest Glory and Felicity upon their Repentance and sincere tho' imperfect Obedience; so there is an awful Display made of the *Majesty* of God's Government and the Authority of his Laws, in that he would not pardon and restore Sinners to Favour without the Intervention of a *Mediator* of such eminent Dignity, who was himself to undergo the most grievous Sufferings in the Stead and upon the Account of the Offenders in order to their Redemption. And at the same time no *irreparable* Injury is done to the suffering Person himself, who both freely consented and undertook thus to suffer for Sinners, and is now as the Reward of his Sufferings *crowned* with Glory and Honour, exalted in that very Nature in which he suffered to the highest Degree of Glory and Felicity.

But our Author farther objects on the other Hand, that if we suppose Justice to be satisfied, there is no Room for the Exercise of pardoning Mercy, and that the Notion of Satisfaction is absolutely inconsistent with a free Pardon. For if *the Satisfaction be full and complete*, it cannot reasonably be refused, and must entitle the Debtor or Offender to an *Acquitment in Law*, which Acquitment in that Case is an *Act of Justice*, and not to be considered as a Pardon or an *Act of Grace*. But where the Satisfaction is not thus full and complete, it is no Satisfaction and good for nothing. To this Purpose is his reasoning from p. 148. to p. 153. where he also endeavoureth to shew that the supposing God himself

self to have found out and contrived this Satisfaction doth not at all alter the Case, or render it an Act of Grace and Mercy. The whole of what is there offered proceedeth upon this Supposition; that there is an exact Parallel between the Satisfaction Christ made to his heavenly Father for the Sins of Mankind, and a *pecuniary* Surety's paying the Money to the Creditor on the Behalf of the Debtor. In which Case it will be easily acknowledged that the Acquittal of the *Debtor* by the Creditor is an Act of Justice; and that the *Creditor* doth not properly remit any thing at all, or exercise any Act of Mercy or Generosity to the Debtor, but all the Obligation is to the *Surety*. And if the *Creditor* should himself contrive to find out some Person that would pay him the Money instead of the *Debtor* who was insolvent, this would not be so much a Proof of his Kindness and Compassion to the Debtor, as of his own cunning Contrivance to get his Money. But if this Writer were as well versed in this Controversy as he pretendeth to be, he could not but know that the ablest Defenders of the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction have maintained that it is in several Respects very different from the Satisfaction made by a *pecuniary* Surety to the Creditor, by paying him his Money. And the Absurdity of arguing from the one of these to the other hath been often shewn. The Satisfaction made by *Christ* by suffering for our Sins, is properly an *Expedient* fixed upon by the wise and righteous Governor of the World for dispensing his Mercy to penitent Sinners of the human Race, in such a Way as may at the same time vindicate the Authority of his Laws, and preserve the Rights and Dignity of his Government. And on this Supposition we may be sure, that if he fixeth upon any Expedient, it will be such as is *fitted* to answer the End proposed by it, and in this Sense will be a sufficient Satisfaction. But the Sufficiency of the Satisfaction taken in this

View, that is, its being fitted to answer the End proposed by it, which is, to preserve the Reverence due to God's Authority and Laws, and to manifest his glorious Greatness, Justice, and Purity, at the same time that he exerciseth the highest Mercy to the Sinner; is indeed a Proof of his great rectoral *Wisdom*, but doth not at all diminish the Freedom of his *Mercy*. The Pardon is as *free* to the Offenders, and is as much the Effect of his Grace and Goodness, as if it had been given absolutely without any such Provision or Expedient at all. And this particular Way of doing it, by giving his own *Son* to suffer in our Stead, is a more glorious Proof of his rich Grace and Goodness (and therefore still spoken of in Scripture as the most wonderful Instance of his Love to Mankind that can possibly be conceived) than if he had pardoned Sinners by a meer Act of his absolute Prerogative without any such Satisfaction at all. It is still true, that eternal Life is the *free Gift* of God to undeserving Sinners, with this enhancing Circumstance, that in order to open a Way for conferring it upon us in a Manner suited to the Glory of his Government and moral Excellencies, and the Order and general Good of the moral World, he gave his Son to suffer and die for our Sins, and confers this Life upon us *through* his Blood and Mediation.

It is therefore far from being true, which our Author urgeth against this Doctrine, that in this Method all our *Thanks and Praises must be due primarily and chiefly to the Person who has made this Satisfaction for us; and that we cannot receive any thing at all as a free Gift, or Act of Grace from God.* p. 152. Or, as he expresseth it p. 151, *It robs God of the Glory of his pardoning Mercy, and gives all the Honour of it to Christ the Surety.* For Christ did not die for us, to *dispose* God to be merciful to us, as he is pleased to represent the Sentiments of

of those that are *Advocates* for Christ's Satisfaction; but it was because he was *disposed* and determined to shew Mercy towards us, and that in such a Way as should best comport with the Dignity of his Government, and his illustrious moral Excellencies, that he sent his Son to suffer and die for our Redemption. So that this is so far from shewing, as he would have it, that *God has no such essential Attribute as Mercy, or any Disposition to Pardon or Forgiveness in his own Nature*, p. 150. that the whole Design had its Rise in his rich Grace and Mercy, and the most free and boundless Benevolence of his own Nature, and is only a *Contrivance* of Wisdom how to exercise his Mercy towards Sinners, in a Way most becoming his own glorious Perfections, and the Character he bears as the great Governor of the World. In this Scheme therefore, tho' we are under very great Obligations to the *Son*, all is ultimately referred to the Glory of the *Father*; and by his *Grace* we are saved. All Blessings come to us from the *Father*, as the Fountain and prime glorious Author of them, thro' the *Son*, as the great Medium of Communication. They come as really from the *Father*, and are as truly his Gifts, as if there were no Regard had in the conferring them to the *Mediator* at all. The giving them to us thro' *Jesus Christ*, and with a Regard to his Sufferings and *Mediation* on our Behalf, relates only to the fittest Manner of *Conveyance*, or that Way of *distributing* those Gifts, which seems most fit to the Supreme Wisdom.

Another Objection upon which he seems to lay a great Stress is this, That Christ's Satisfaction is perfectly needless, because Repentance and new Obedience will do as well without it. *That God will pardon Sin upon Repentance and Reformation, and will never reject or cast off a penitent returning Sinner, is the eternal immutable Voice of God in Nature and Reason, as well as Scripture; and therefore*

the Case must be the same, whether Christ had suffered and died, or not. So that there is no Room for the common Jewish Hypothesis of Satisfaction, nor can this alter the Case, whether it be supposed or not. Pag. 148, 150.

But this which he here lays down as a Truth of immutable and eternal Certainty, that God is *obliged* in all Cases and at all Times to pardon and restore his offending Creatures as often as they sincerely repent, and to accept this alone as a sufficient Reparation, if understood *absolutely*, and without any Limitation, is a most absurd Principle, and would intirely vacate the Authority of the Divine Government and Laws. I shall not repeat what I have elsewhere offered concerning this Matter *. But I believe every Man that attentively considers it, will find himself obliged to acknowledge that the Principle which the Author here pretends to establish must necessarily be understood with *Limitations* : and he himself afterwards limits it within very narrow Bounds, as I shall have Occasion to shew. How far Repentance shall be accepted and rewarded, and how far God will extend his Mercy even towards *penitent* Sinners, dependeth wholly on his governing *Wisdom* and *Justice*, and on what he seeth to be necessary for the Preservation of the sacred Rights of his Government, and the good Order of the Whole. When therefore this Author so confidently asserteth, that the Case must have been the same with regard to God's accepting and rewarding penitent returning Sinners, whether Christ had died or not ; he boldly pronounceth in the dark concerning a Thing which it is impossible for him to be sure of. Since he cannot pretend certainly to know what the Divine Government requireth, and what is necessary for answering the

* See *Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation*, Vol. I. Chap. VI.

great Ends of it, and for securing and vindicating his sacred Authority. Besides, when he representeth it as a *certain* Truth founded in Nature and Reason, that God will reward those that repent and obey him; I would desire to know whether he thinks God is obliged, in the Nature and Reason of Things, to reward an imperfect Obedience mixed with many Defects, and falling short in many Instances of what the Divine Law requireth (and such is all our Obedience in this present State) with eternal Life, that is, with as glorious a Reward as we could possibly have hoped for if our Obedience had been absolutely sinless and without Defect, yea and far transcending what in that Case we could have pretended to have deserved from God? Upon what Principle will he pretend to found this? Surely it must be acknowledged, that it dependeth wholly on God's own most free and unmerited Grace and Goodness, and on his supreme Wisdom, how far he will reward the imperfect Obedience of such sinful Creatures, and what kind of Reward he will confer, and in what Way and Method he will dispense it, as the fittest and most suitable to his governing Wisdom and Righteousness. And consequently no Man can without the highest Arrogancy take upon him to say, that the Death of Christ doth not *at all* alter the Case, and that God might as consistently with the great Ends of his Government have conferred Pardon and eternal Life upon Sinners without it as with it. On the contrary we may affirm upon sure Grounds, that God would not have sent his own *Son* to undergo such grievous Sufferings for our Sakes, if our Pardon and Salvation might *as well* have been obtained without it.

With regard to what he saith concerning the Impossibility of *communicating personal Merit and Demerit from one Person to another* (which is another Argument he makes use of against Christ's Satisfaction) and that therefore *it must be an eternal*

Contradiction in the Nature and Reason of Things, to suppose or say that Christ was ever punished for our Sins, or that we are rewarded for his Righteousness, P. 155, 224. It will be easily admitted, that the individual personal Crimes or good Actions of one Man cannot become the individual personal Crimes or good Actions of another, so that that other should be accounted to be the very individual Person that performed that Action, or committed that Crime. But notwithstanding this, Cases may happen, in which one Man may justly suffer for the Crimes committed by another, if he voluntarily undertakes to suffer instead of the other, and the governing Power in the Community seeth fit to accept of that Substitution †. And on the other hand, if one Man should do a glorious Action with a view that the Benefit of it should redound to others, and if we should suppose the governing Power to promise and agree, that in case of his undertaking and performing such a difficult Service, it shall have such or such Effects for the Advantage of others; then there is nothing absurd in supposing, that in Consequence of this, others may reap the Benefit of it, according to the Terms and Conditions agreed on. Nor is there any thing in all this that can be proved to be contrary to the Law of Nature or Reason. Now to apply this. It is not pretended, that Christ's personal Obedience and Sufferings really became our *personal* Obedience and Sufferings: or that God doth esteem us personally to have endured those individual Sufferings, and to have performed that individual Obedience which Christ himself suffered and performed: for that were to esteem us to be one and the same individual Person with Christ himself, or esteem them to be other than they really are. But since what Christ did and suffered was offered and done according to the *Father's*

† That for this we have the Consent of Nations, see *Grosius de Satisf. Christi*, Cap. 4.

wife and gracious *Will* and Appointment for our Sakes and upon our Account, to obtain Pardon and eternal Life for all those that should comply with the Terms fixed in the New Covenant; it is highly congruous, that the Benefit of *Christ's* Obedience and Sufferings should be applied to those for whose Benefit it was designed; and that in conferring Pardon and eternal Life upon us, *God* should have a Regard to what his *Son* by his own Appointment did and suffered on our Behalf, as a Reason to his infinite Wisdom and Righteousness for conferring that Pardon and Salvation upon us, in that Way and upon those Terms which he hath appointed. When therefore this Writer declares, that he is *satisfied there is a Day coming, in which no Plea from the Merits or Righteousness of Christ will be of any Avail*: and that he is *as sure of this, as he is that God ever made known himself to Mankind, either by the Christian Revelation, or any other Way.* p. 170. If he means, that this shall not be allowed as a *Plea* for those that obstinately persisted in *Impenitency*, and a Course of presumptuous Disobedience to his Authority and Laws, or as excusing Men from *personal* Obedience, 'it is very true: But if he means, that no Regard shall be had to what *Christ* did and suffered on our Behalf, as a *Reason* why the Sins of the truly Penitent shall be forgiven them, and not urged against them to their Condemnation at the great Day; and why the Obedience of the truly Upright and Sincere, tho' imperfect and mixed with many Failures and Defects, shall be crowned with so glorious and transcendent a Reward, this is not true. Nor can he bring any good Argument to shew the Absurdity of such a Scheme, or that there is any thing in it contrary to Justice or Wisdom.

The Strength of what he hath thought fit to urge against this dependeth wholly upon the wrong Representation he is pleased to make of this Matter.

He

He represents the Advocates for Christ's Satisfaction, as *pleading the Merit of his Death in Exemption from the Obedience which God requires of us*, p. 178. and as supposing, that God will reward or punish Men in the Day of Judgment, not according to their own personal Actions, but for the *Actions of others, without any Regard to the natural Individuality or moral Characters of the Persons thus rewarded or punished*. p. 155, 198. And on this Foundation he objecteth against the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction, as inconsistent with the great Principle of God's judging all Men at the last Day according to their Works; which Principle he makes to be the *certain and infallible Criterion between true and false Religion*. But the Necessity of *personal Repentance and new Obedience* is as strongly supported upon the Scheme of those that assert Christ's Satisfaction, as it can possibly be upon any other. Because the Benefit of Christ's Satisfaction doth only extend to those who *comply with the Terms fixed in the New Covenant*: And it is evident from the whole Gospel, that *personal Repentance and new Obedience* is there indispensably required of all that would be Partakers of that great Salvation which God offereth to us through his Son. It is as true on this Scheme, as it is on the Author's own, that *personal Righteousness, or a personal Compliance with the Terms of Acceptance, is absolutely and indispensably necessary*. And it will be easily acknowledged, that *no Redundancy of Merit, or any personal imputed Righteousness of another, can be ever taken in Account as an Equivalent for this*, as he expresseth it, p. 169; If by this be meant, that it will not be taken *instead* of our own personal Obedience, so as to render that unnecessary. Yea, it may be justly affirmed, that there is less Hope of Pardon and Indulgence for those who do not now comply with the Terms of Divine Mercy, by repenting and forsaking their evil Ways, upon the Scheme of those who maintain

the *Gospel* Doctrine of *Christ's* Satisfaction, than there is or can be upon the Scheme which this Writer seems here to advance. For since God is so just and holy, and hath such an inviolable Regard to the Authority of his Government and Laws, that he would not pardon our Sins, and give us eternal Life, even upon our Repentance, and sincere tho' imperfect Obedience, without at the same time making such an effectual *Provision* for securing the Authority of his Government by the Sufferings of his own Son in our Nature and Stead; then it is evident, that those cannot hope to escape, who by their Impenitency and Disobedience *reject* this Remedy which he hath in his infinite Wisdom and Goodness provided for them; and that they, who now refuse to comply with the Terms on which alone Pardon and Salvation is offered thro' his Son, can have no Ground to expect any farther Offer of Mercy in any future Time or State of Things. Than which nothing can possibly be a stronger Argument to shew the absolute Necessity of a present Compliance with the *Gospel* Terms, that is, to engage us to present Repentance and new Obedience. Whereas if Repentance and Reformation alone be supposed at all Times a sufficient Satisfaction without any other Provision for securing the Majesty of the Divine Government, and the Authority of his Laws; then tho' Persons should reject the Terms on which Mercy is now offered during this State of Trial, yet they might hope, that if at any Time during the Course of their Existence even after this Life is at an End, they should repent and be reformed, God would pardon and save them. And that the Way would always be *open* for their being received to Favour, as often as ever they should repent and be reformed, not only in this Life, but to all Eternity. And whether this, if it were really believed, would not be a great Encouragement to Sinners to defer their Repentance and Reformation, and to indulge themselves

selves in a present Gratification of their corrupt Appetites, may be left to the Consideration of any impartial thinking Person. That which the Author declares concerning the Doctrine which he hath advanced, may with much greater Propriety be applied to the *Scripture-Doctrine* of Christ's Satisfaction, that it is *the Doctrine that must support the Authority of God, and keep up the Awe and Influence of his governing Justice and moral Perfections in the World.* p. 199. At the same time that the most glorious Favours and Benefits are conferred upon sinful Creatures, on Condition of their returning to God by Repentance, and a sincere tho' imperfect Obedience, Care is taken to guard and temper this marvellous Grace, so as not to give them any Temptation either to think lightly of the Evil of those Sins which are so fully pardoned, or to entertain too high Thoughts of the Merit of their Obedience, which is so gloriously rewarded.

Another Attempt this Writer makes against the Satisfaction of Christ is this, that the Redundancy of Christ's Merit could not be placed to our Account, because all that was done and suffered by him was necessary to himself, and on his own Account. As he was under a Law to God, and acted with the Prospect of a glorious eternal Reward, he could not have failed in any Part of his Obedience without losing that Reward, and forfeiting the Divine Favour. He finished the Work that was given him to do, but then he did no more than he was bound to do, and nothing less could have been accepted from him. And tho' his Obedience was free, it was a necessary Obligation laid upon him by the Will and Law of God; from which he would gladly have been excused if his heavenly Father had thought fit. His praying so earnestly not to be put upon such a Trial shews that he had no such Notion of the Necessity of his Death as a Propitiation and Atonement for the Sins of the World. He would not have spent a whole Night in such passionate Pray-

ers to God in order to prevent a Thing which he certainly knew must happen, and which had been previously agreed on between the Father and him, see p. 154, 155.

It will be easily owned that Christ having once freely undertaken the Work of our Redemption, was under an *Obligation* to finish it. But then it must be considered that his assuming our Nature, and being brought under this Obligation to suffer and die for us, was not merely by an Act of God's absolute *Authority*, but by his own free *Consent*, and voluntary *Susception*. And his undertaking this is still represented as the most astonishing Proof of his wonderful *Love* to Mankind, a Love beyond all Comprehension, and beyond all Parallel. And tho' it pleased God highly to reward him in his human Nature for his Humiliation and Sufferings, the Prospect of which helped to support him under those Sufferings, yet nothing can be more evident than it is from the whole New Testament, that the proper Design of his coming into the World was not to procure Glory to himself; for this he had with the Father before the World was; but to seek and to save that which was lost. What he did and suffered was truly and properly on our Account, to open a Way for our being pardoned and raised to the highest Felicity according to the glorious Designs of infinite Wisdom and Goodness. The Law he was under as *Mediator* by his own Consent, and the Father's Appointment, obliged him to make his Soul an Offering for Sins, to suffer and die for our Offences, and thereby to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to give his Life a Ransom for many. And it is very odd to argue, that because he was under this Law, therefore what he did and suffered could not be accepted on our Account, when by the essential Tenor of this Law what he did and suffered was done upon our Account, and was to be accepted on our Behalf.

And

And whereas this Writer argues, that Christ would not have prayed to the Father that the bitter Cup might pass from him, if he had had any *Notion of his Death as a Propitiation for the Sins of the World*, or if he had *certainly known* that his *Death* was a *Thing that must happen, and which had been previously agreed on between the Father and him*: it is manifest that this Prayer could not be intended as he represents it. Since it plainly appeareth from many express Passages in the *Gospel*, that our Lord very well knew that he must certainly suffer and die; and that this was the Work which the *Father had given him to do*, and which he himself had freely undertaken. As he declareth in general, that he came into the World *to do the Will of his heavenly Father that sent him*; so also that one great End for which he was sent was that he might *give his Life a Ransom for many*, Matt. xx. 28. and might *give his Flesh for the Life of the World*, John vi. 51. He expressly saith, *as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father*: i. e. the Father knoweth my Intentions and Dispositions, and I am perfectly acquainted with the Father's most wise and gracious Counsels and Designs: *and I lay down my Life for the Sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my Life.—No Man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self; I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again. This Commandment have I received of my Father*, John x. 15, 17, 18. A most remarkable Passage, from which it appeareth, that the laying down his Life for the Salvation of Mankind was a Thing in which the Father's Appointment, and his own most free and voluntary Consent perfectly concurred. It was not a mere Constraint laid upon him by God's absolute Authority; his Life was not taken from him whether he would or not; but he laid it down of himself, it was his own Act and Choice, and therefore the Father loved him. Here
therefore

therefore we have the Substance of what Divines commonly call the *Covenant of Redemption*, and which our Author hath thought fit to ridicule, p. 222, 223. For our Saviour here plainly representeth his laying down his Life for the Sheep, as a Thing agreed upon between the Father and him; and that the Design of all was for our Sakes, to procure the Salvation of Sinners. Accordingly, he frequently and expressly told his Disciples, what Manner of Death he was to die, what Kind of Sufferings he was to endure, and the principal Circumstances of those Sufferings; and this he foretold as a Thing which he knew would most certainly come to pass*. And when *Peter* upon hearing him declare that he was to suffer and die, took upon him to say, *far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee*: he gave him the severest Rebuke that ever he gave to any of his Disciples, *get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me, for thou savourest not the Things which be of God, but those that be of Men*, Matt. xvi. 21—23. From whence it appears what a strong Sense he had of the Certainty of his Sufferings and Death, and the Importance and Necessity of those Sufferings for answering very valuable Ends and Purposes. To which it may be added, that that very Night in which he was betrayed, he instituted an Ordinance to be observed in his Church for a perpetual Memorial of his Body broken and Blood shed for the Remission of Sins; where he represented it as a Thing which was no less certain than if it had been actually accomplished. It is evident therefore that the Design of those Prayers which he offered up to the *Father* immediately after this, could not be with any View or Expectation that his Sufferings and Death should be prevented, since he

* See Matt. xvi. 21. xx. 17, 18, 19. Mark ix. 31. x. 33, 34. Luke xviii. 31, 32, 33.

perfectly knew that he must suffer and die; that it was the *Father's Will* that he should do so; and that this was one important Part of the Work which was given him to do, and which he himself had freely undertaken. But either the Design of his Prayer was that he might be delivered from those tremendous Sorrows and *Agonies* of Soul which he then laboured under, and which were beyond all Expression grievous, as appears from the Accounts the Evangelists give us of them; and this was not a declining the Work that was given him to do for our Salvation; since the *Extremity* of those Sorrows might be allayed or dispensed with, tho' his dying for our Sins could not: Or, if the *bitter Cup* mentioned by our Saviour in his Prayer related to the whole of his Suffering and *Dying*, then the Design of his Prayer taken together is evidently this; to signify that his Sufferings and Sorrows were so inexpressibly grievous and dreadful that if it were possible he could have wished to be delivered from them; but that as he knew it was the *Father's Will* for very wise and valuable Ends, he submitted and resigned himself to undergo them however grievous and shocking they might be, in themselves considered. To the same Purpose is the Prayer he had uttered not long before on the Prospect of his Sufferings, *John xii. 27, 28. Now is my Soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this Hour: but for this Cause came I unto this Hour: Father glorify thy Name*, i. e. I foresee my Sufferings will be so great and grievous, that the Prospect of them fills my Soul with Trouble and Amazement, so that I could wish if possible to be delivered from that Hour of Suffering and Sorrow which I see approaching: but as I know that for this End I came into the World, and that this is thy Will, and what thou hast appointed for wise and gracious Ends; it is my Desire and Will that thou shouldst glorify thy Name, and fulfil the Designs

signs of thy Wisdom and Goodness, tho' by my most grievous Sufferings.

Whereas therefore this Writer tells us, that Christ *would gladly have been excused* from this Trial, *if his heavenly Father had thought fit*; it is very true, that he would have been willing to have been freed from those Sufferings, if it had been consistent with the great Designs of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness; for he did not choose Sufferings in themselves and for their own Sakes: but taking in the whole, that it was the *Father's Will*, and that such great and valuable Ends were to be answered by it, he was willing and did undertake it. So that it is not true, that he *declined a few Hours bodily Sufferings*, as he represents it. For he did not decline his Sufferings upon the whole, and taking in all Considerations: he only poured forth his Sorrows before his heavenly Father, and at the same time that he expressed his *natural Aversion* and Horrors of those Sufferings absolutely and in themselves considered, he declared his *Resolution* to undergo them as the Case was circumstanced. And this Prayer of his is highly useful for our Sakes, to give us a more lively Sense of the exceeding Greatness of his Sufferings and Sorrows; and of the great *Importance* and Necessity of them, that they were such as could not be dispensed with; and to set us a *Pattern* of the most entire Resignation to God in the most difficult and trying Circumstances. And I think this is evident from the whole Account that is given us of our Saviour's last Agonies and Sorrows, that there was more in them than the mere Dread and Apprehension of *temporal Death*, and the Sufferings he endured from the Hands of Men. It was not the mere Prospect of a *few Hours bodily Pain*, *in a Way that so many thousands had suffered before him*, as this Writer expresseth it, that filled his Soul with such Agonies and Conflict. Since many of the Martyrs, vastly inferior to him in a true Firm-

ness and Constancy of Mind have been enabled to bear temporal Death, and the severest bodily Suffering not only with Patience but with Joy and Exultation of Mind. It is evident there was something in his Sufferings and Sorrows that lay much *deeper*, and which far transcended the greatest Sufferings of the persecuted Saints and Martyrs; something that we are not able distinctly to describe and to explain, but which should fill us with awful Thoughts of the Majesty, Greatness, and Purity of God, and of his Abhorrence against Sin, when we consider that all these his Sufferings, so grievous and inexpressible, were for our Sins.

There is one Objection more which our Author frequently insists upon with a peculiar Air of Triumph, as a perfect Demonstration that there can be no Foundation for the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction in Scripture: and that is, that there *was no such Thing as vicarious Sacrifices under the Law of Moses*, and therefore there could be no Reference to any such Sacrifices in the New Testament when speaking of the Death of Christ; and this he proves, because under that Law *no other Penalty of what Nature or Kind soever was ever taken off or mitigated on the Account of Sacrifice*. But this hath been shewn to be a great Mistake: see above *chap. vi.* to which I refer the Reader; where he will find all that the Author offers with a View to prove that there could be no expiatory Sacrifice under the Law of *Moses*, considered. I shall only here farther observe, that whereas he wonders at *Grotius* and the Systematical Divines, for supposing that *ever the Life of a Beast under the Law was taken and accepted of instead of the Life of the Offender*; and declares, that if they can give him any such Instance he will be bound under a Penalty never to speak a Word more, p. 126, 127. If he understands by it, that they must give him an Instance, where a Person that had been guilty of

of a Crime against which the Law had expressly denounced the civil Penalty of Death, was by Law to be freed from that Penalty upon offering a Sacrifice: this is what none of those Systematical Divines over whom he so unmercifully triumphs were ever so absurd as to suppose: For they all know that in such Cases there were no Sacrifices appointed or admitted by Law at all. But then this is so far from proving as this Writer intends it, that there were no *vicarious* Sacrifices under the Law, that it rather proves the contrary. For the Reason why no Sacrifices were appointed in those Cases was, because Sacrifices were understood to free a Man from the Penalty he had incurred by his Crime. And therefore when it was designed that the Offender in Person must die, and when it was judged necessary for the Good of the Community that it should be so, *no Sacrifices* were appointed, because he must shed his own Blood, and therefore no Blood of the Beast was to be shed to make Atonement for him. If Sacrifices had been admitted in such Cases, and yet the Punishment had been inflicted on the Criminal, it might have been argued that those Sacrifices were of no Avail to avert the threatened Penalty. But it is a general Rule, that in all Cases where it was judged necessary that the Offender himself should suffer in his own Person, whether it were the Punishment of Death, or any other Penalty, there was no Sacrifice to be offered, or Blood of Atonement to be shed for him at all: and on the other Hand, in all Cases where the Blood or Life of the Beast was to be offered for the Man to make Atonement for him, the Law never appointed *Death* or any other *Penalty* whatsoever to be actually inflicted on him; which shews that Sacrifices were supposed to avert the Penalty from the Person on whose Account they were offered.

In Cases where Sacrifices were prescribed to be offered for Sin, the Man that came to offer the

Sacrifice was to *lay his Hand* upon the Head of the Victim, and to *confess his Sin*, and *Trespasses which he had committed*, Lev. v. 5. and if he had wronged his Neighbour was to make Restitution; and then the Animal was to be slain, and his Blood shed and sprinkled upon the Altar, and thereby offered to the divine Majesty: And hereupon the Offender was in the Eye of the Law freed from the Guilt he had contracted. The Curse he had incurred in strict Justice was supposed to be averted by the Blood of the Sacrifice shed for Atonement. For it is declared, that it is *the Blood that maketh Atonement for the Soul*: and the Reason is given, *because the Life of the Flesh is in the Blood*, Lev. xvii.

11. From whence it is plain, that the Atonement lay in this, that the Blood or Life of the Animal was given or offered for the Offender, to free him from the Guilt he had contracted, and the Curse and Punishment he had incurred by his Sin. And accordingly this Writer himself tells us, that the *Jews* had a *very high Opinion of their legal Sacrifices and Atonements by Blood*: and that it *was an established Principle with the whole Jewish Nation, that without shedding of Blood there could be no Remission*: and that they thought that *God himself could be no otherwise satisfied and atoned but with Blood*. And therefore he would have it that St. Paul was obliged to talk of the Blood and Death of Christ as an *expiatory Sacrifice* in Compliance with their *Prejudices*; but that the Metaphor, as he uses it, *ought not to be strained to the rigid, literal, and most absurd Sense of the Jewish Law*, p. 163—165. Where he manifestly supposeth, that the *Jews* did acknowledge a vicarious Sacrifice in that Sense in which it is to be understood in this Question, and that this was agreeable to the *literal Sense* of their own *Law*. And hence he frequently calleth the Assertors of Christ's Satisfaction *Judaizers*, and the Doctrine itself the *Jewish Doctrine of Propitiation and Atonement*.

ment. And yet this same very consistent Writer hath the Confidence to assert over and over again, that there *was no such Thing as a vicarious Sacrifice under the Law*; and that therefore the Apostle Paul could not refer to any such Practice, or suppose the Death of Christ analogous to a Thing that never existed, not so much as in Supposition. And therefore the Christian Priests who have introduced this Notion of a vicarious penal Sacrifice, have run into grosser Absurdities and more dangerous Errors concerning it, than ever the Jewish or Pagan Priests had done, p. 210. But that the Notion of vicarious Sacrifices was not first introduced by the Christian Priests, but had obtained long before both among Jews and Pagans, may be proved with the clearest Evidence*. And it is also undeniably evident that Christ's Sufferings and Death all along in the New Testament are represented under the Notion of an *expiatory Sacrifice*; and that the Sacrifices that were offered under the Law are there represented as the Types and Figures of that most perfect Oblation which Christ hath offered, and of the true Atonement for the Sins of Mankind made by his Suffering and Dying for us.

The Way our Author taketh to account for Christ's Sufferings and Death being called a Propitiation and Sacrifice is pretty extraordinary. He makes a Propitiation or Sacrifice in general to be something offered to God by a voluntary Act of Obedience to his Will, upon which God becomes propitious to the Person who yields and performs that Obedience. And therefore Christ's Propitiation according to him was nothing but the Obedience he yielded and offered to God, upon which God became propitious to him, and highly rewarded him, as he will also be propitious to us

* For this see among others Dr. *Outram de Sacrif. lib. 1. cap. xxii.* see also *cap. xx. p. 228, 229.*

upon our Obedience. And he saith, that *Christ by his Death and shedding his own Blood made a publick Declaration or authentick Notification from God of the propitiatory reconciling Virtue or Acceptableness of such personal Obedience*, p. 225. But at this Rate Christ could not be said to offer a Propitiation for us at all, but only for himself, and every Man as well as he might be said to offer a Propitiation for himself by his own Obedience. And how this will agree with the Scripture Expressions, and the Account there given us, may be left to any Man of common Understanding that can read the New Testament. Besides, I do not see how upon this Scheme he can be said to be a *Propitiation for Sins* at all, much less for *the Sins of the whole World*: since he had no Sins of his own to atone for, and according to this Writer made no Atonement for ours. Nor can I see with what Sense it can be said, that *Christ by his Death, and shedding his own Blood, made an authentick Notification from God of the propitiatory Virtue and Acceptableness of his Obedience*; since it was not his Suffering and Dying that properly notified to the World the Acceptableness of his Obedience, and that God was well pleased with him and his Obedience, but his *Resurrection* and consequent Glorification. And therefore it was this, and not his Sufferings and Death, that according to our Author's Account of it, should have been called a Propitiation, which he makes to be only declarative of the Virtue and Acceptableness of his Obedience. But I shall not spend any more Time in considering the Account he pretends to give of this Matter, which hath nothing to support it, but his own Imagination. But this I am confident of that if there had been nothing more in our Saviour's Sufferings and Death than this Writer would have to be understood and intended by it, the New Testament Writers would never have spoken of it, and represented it in the Manner they have done, and
in

in Phrases which according to the Usage of them that then obtained thro' all the World both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, must almost unavoidably lead them to quite different Notions, and to look upon it as making a true *Expiation* for the Sins of the World.

This Book is already swelled so much beyond my original Intention, that I must be very Brief in my Reflections on the Account he pretends to give of some other Doctrines of Christianity. Thus under Pretence of rectifying the Mistakes that have prevailed among *Christian Divines* for 1400 Years past to the unspeakable Detriment of the *Christian World*, and of *Mankind* in general, with regard to the *Christian Doctrine of Pardon upon Repentance*, he makes a very extraordinary Attempt to prove, that not one wilful Sin under the *Gospel* shall be pardoned even tho' a Man doth sincerely repent of it and forsake it. And that the general Offer of Pardon upon Repentance made in the *Gospel*, extended only to the Sins committed by *Jews* or *Heathens* before their embracing the Faith of Christ, but did not extend to any one wilful presumptuous Sin committed under the *Gospel Dispensation* itself, after Men had engaged themselves in the *Christian Covenant*, see from p. 170, to p. 177. This is to make the Grace of the *Gospel* much narrower than it was under the Old Testament Dispensation. For in the Law of *Moses* there was Pardon not only for Sins of Ignorance, but even for wilful deliberate Sins which were afterwards sincerely repented of, and which the Offender himself had voluntarily confessed; such are the Instances mentioned, *Lev.* vi. 2, 3. And it is evident that the *Prophets* every where abound with Promises of Pardon and Mercy even to the greatest Sinners upon their Repentance and Reformation. And can it be supposed that the *Gospel Dispensation* which makes the most glorious Discoveries of the Divine Grace and Good-

ness was designed to confine the Mercy of God towards penitent returning Sinners in narrower Limits than it had been before, as it must have been if the Representation our Author gives of it be true? He pretends to prove this by three Texts; two of which, *viz.* *Heb.* vi. 4—6. and *Heb.* x. 26, 27. are evidently to be understood not of any one *single* wilful Sin which a Man might happen to commit and of which he afterwards sincerely repented, but of a *total Apostacy* from the Christian Faith and Practice, as will appear to any one that impartially considers those Passages; and the Reader that would see this clearly proved may consult Dr. *Whitby*. With respect to one of these Passages, *viz.* *Heb.* vi. 4—6. the Author is guilty of a signal Falsification of the Text. For he represents it as if it had been said, that it is impossible to renew the Persons there mentioned *by Repentance*; and puts these Words in large Characters to distinguish them; the Sense of which he makes to be this, “That it “is impossible to restore them to Pardon, tho’ they “should repent.” Whereas the Original has it as it is justly rendered in our Translation, that it is impossible to renew them *unto Repentance*, *viz.* because they had sinned against the best and most effectual Means that could be made use of to convince and to convert them. And the Simile by which he illustrates it necessarily requires this Sense. For he compares their Case to that of *barren Ground*, which tho’ it hath had Rain coming upon it, and hath been often dressed and cultivated, bringeth forth nothing but *Briars* and *Thorns*, and is therefore *rejected and nigh unto Cursing*. Where his Meaning cannot be, that if that Land after long continuing barren should at length bring forth Fruit and Grain, it must notwithstanding this be rejected; but that there was no hope of its ever becoming fruitful after all the Cultivation that had been laid upon it had proved ineffectual, and therefore

it was rejected and accursed. The last Passage he produceth is from *John* v. 16, 17, 18. concerning *the Sin unto Death*, which he pretends cannot be understood of a total *Apostacy* from the Faith of *Christ*, or of the Sin against the *Holy Ghost*, because it is said to be the Sin of a *Brother or Fellow-Professor of Christ*, which an *Apostate* could not be. But without entring into a particular Explication of that Passage which would lead me too far, I shall only observe that the Author's Observation upon it will not hold good. Tho' *the Sin not unto Death*, is not there expressly said to be the Sin of a *Brother*, as this Writer affirms: Or if the Apostle had expressed it thus, *if a Brother Sin a Sin unto Death*, &c. it would not have followed that this Sin unto Death could not be understood of an *Apostacy* from the Gospel. For it would be sufficient to justify such a Manner of Expression, if the Person guilty of that Sin was one that had before professed himself a *Brother* or a Christian. Nor can I see any Absurdity in such a Phrase as this; if a Christian should totally apostatize from the Faith and Practice of the Gospel, he cannot expect the divine Pardon and Mercy. And of some such Persons the Apostle *John* seems to speak in several Passages of this Epistle. But whatever be the precise Meaning of this Passage, into which I shall not now particularly enquire, it cannot admit of the Interpretation he gives of it. He is pleased to talk of the *unnatural forced and constrained Constructions that Divines put upon these Words*, but I know of no Construction so absurd and unnatural as his own. Which is, that this Sin unto Death must signify any wilful presumptuous Sin under the Gospel in Violation of a Man's Covenant Engagements to the Christian Faith and Practice: That every such Sin is the Sin unto Death which is not to be prayed for, and which according to this Author cannot be forgiven even upon Repentance and Reformation.

Whereas

Whereas it is evident from the whole Gospel that that cannot be called a *Sin unto Death*, which is sincerely repented of. *Repentance and Remission of Sins*, are there always joined together, as having an inseparable Connection: and in this very Epistle St. John saith, that *the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sins*, that is, from all Sin truly repented of 1 John i. 7. for so he explains himself, Ver. 9. *If we confess our Sins* (where Confession is put for the whole of true Repentance, of which it is a part) *he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.*

The Reasons this Writer pretends to give to shew the Absurdity of supposing that wilful presumptuous Sins are pardonable upon Repentance, proceed entirely upon a *wrong* Representation of the Doctrine of Repentance. If Repentance were supposed to be no more than a Man's expressing his Sorrow for his Sins at the same Time that he persists in the Practice of those wilful presumptuous Sins which he pretends to confess and bewail, or a crying to God for Mercy in his last Hours, and feeling some Bitterness and Remorse from an Apprehension of the Wrath and Misery which is ready to come upon him for his Crimes; if this alone were judged to be sufficient to *wipe off the guilty Score*, I will allow that this would be a great Encouragement to Sin. But this is not that Repentance to which Pardon is promised in the Gospel. Nor need we this Author to set us right in this Matter, who talks as if he came to enlighten the World with some new Discoveries on this Subject, when the most judicious *Divines* have all along asserted the utter Insufficiency of such a Repentance, and shewn the extreme Folly and Danger of relying upon it. The Repentance to which Pardon and Life is promised in the New Covenant, includes such a real effectual *Change* whereby a Person becomes a *new Man* and a *new Creature*; that the vicious Habits must

must be mortified, and the Soul must be turned from the Love of Vice and Sin to a real prevailing Abhorrence of it, and to a Love of God and universal Goodness. And tho' a Man may have been guilty of hainous wilful Sins in Violation of his Christian Covenant and Vow, and may have long persisted in them, yet if afterwards he is brought to a true Repentance for them, and not only with deep Sorrow and Humiliation applies to God thro' Jesus Christ for pardoning Mercy, but becomes thoroughly changed and reformed, and is delivered from the Power of his evil Habits, and brought to a holy Life and Practice; it is very plain from the whole Gospel that such a Man is entitled according to the New Covenant to Pardon and Forgiveness: his Sins shall not be charged upon him to his Condemnation, but he shall thro' the rich *Grace* and Mercy of God in *Jesus Christ* be made Partaker of that great Salvation which is promised in the Gospel. And it is evidently of great Advantage to the Interest of true Religion in the World, that there should be Encouragement given to Sinners during the Continuance of this State of Trial to repent and forsake their evil Ways, and to apply themselves in good earnest to the Practice of Righteousness. But if a Man after having been once guilty of any wilful presumptuous Sin, *e. g.* of any one deliberate Act of Injustice, Fraud, Violence, Uncleaness, &c. which are committed in Violation of the Gospel Covenant, and against which, if persisted in, Damnation is there denounced, could never hope to be forgiven or restored to the divine Favour, tho' he should never so sincerely repent and become entirely reformed, and shew the most excellent Dispositions: This Doctrine, under pretence of standing up for the Necessity of a holy Life, would really be a *Prejudice* to the Cause of Virtue; since it would entirely defeat the Force of all Exhortations to Repentance, and would absolutely

lutely discourage all Endeavours after Reformation and Amendments, and tend to harden Men in Sin and Impenitency.

Here by the Way we may observe the great Consistency of this Writer, who elsewhere represents it, as the *eternal immutable Voice of Reason and Nature as well as Scripture*, that God will pardon Sin upon Repentance and Reformation, and never reject and cast off a penitent returning Sinner, and that to deny this would be to deny the *Mercy and Goodness of God*, and to leave no rational Ground of Hope or Trust in him from any Revelation whatsoever. p. 150, 212. and yet here represents the Doctrine of Pardon upon Repentance, as a Doctrine that gives the greatest Encouragment to Sin and Wickedness; and denies that any wilful Sins committed against Covenant-Engagements can ever be remitted; and asserts that no *Grace or Favour of the Gospel, or Benefit by Christ, can ever be pleaded for any such Sins*, even tho' they should be sincerely repented of, p. 171, 172, &c. It is true, he pretends that it doth not follow from this, that Repentance for such wilful presumptuous Sins would be of no Avail, because Repentance must always have this good Effect, to lessen the Number of Men's Sins, and increase the Value of their good Actions, in the Day of Account. But how can this Repentance for wilful Sins lessen the Number of Men's Sins in the Day of Account, if wilful Sins are not pardonable upon Repentance, as he expressly affirms? If such a Repentance cannot procure the Pardon of other Sins? According to the Interpretation this Writer pretends to give of the Text produced by him, there could remain no hope of Mercy for such Persons tho' they should repent, but a *certain fearful looking for of Judgments, and fiery Indignation*. And then of what Avail their Repentance for such Sins would be, or how it could increase the Weight and Value of their good Actions, is hard to see.

But

But I cannot help remarking on this Occasion, that this Author who here pretends such a mighty Concern for the Interests of *practical Religion*, and who seems so afraid of giving the least Encouragement to Sin and Wickedness, that he denounces nothing but Death and Judgment even against all that have been guilty of any one wilful Sin committed under the Gospel, tho' they should afterwards be never so thoroughly reformed; this righteous Author who is here so zealous for strict rigid Justice at the Day of Judgment, elsewhere thinks fit to make a Mock of *Hell* and *Damnation*, and the *Perpetuity* of the Torments of the Wicked, and represents it as the Invention of the *Clergy*, to keep up the Awe of their own Authority, see p. 400, 401. He makes the *eternal Fire* into which the Wicked shall then be sent, and which is a strong Expression designed to convey to us a more lively *Idea* of the Greatness of the Punishment and Misery prepared for them, to be nothing else but a *consuming* their Bodies in the Flames at the Day of Judgment: and the *second Death* and *everlasting Destruction* that shall befall them, to be only an utter abolishing of their Being, Body and Soul. So that *their Worm which dieth not*, is a Worm that shall soon die; and their *Fire which shall not be quenched*, is a Fire that shall soon be quenched, and that for ever. And all the Expressions used in Scripture in various Forms to signify the *Perpetuity* of the Punishment prepared for the Wicked, signify no more than that the Punishment which shall be denounced against them in the Day of Judgment, shall in that Day be ended at once in the utter Extinction of their Being. And if this were to be all the Punishment the most obstinate and hardened Sinners were to expect, that they must first be condemned, and then immediately be consumed and *annihilated* at the great Day, and so an utter immediate End be put to all their Torments and Miseries,

Miseries, I do not see any great Matter of Terror there would be in this to affright Men from their evil Courses; and am certain that if this were generally believed it would take off the greatest Restraints on Men's impetuous Lusts and Vices, and would let loose the Reins to all manner of Wickedness, Violence and Impurity. To which it may be added, that upon this Scheme there is no Room for supposing different Torments to the Wicked in Proportion to the different Aggravations of their Crimes, since all are alike to be consumed and annihilated. I cannot but observe on this Occasion that *Celsus* himself carries it much farther than this Writer. For he saith that the Christians are right in this, that they believe that those that have lived well shall be happy, but the *Unjust or Unrighteous shall be subject to eternal Evils*, *οἱ ἀδικοὶ ἀνάστατον αἰώνιον πῦρ ὀνειδίζονται*. And he represents this as a Doctrine in which all Mankind are agreed, and from which no Body ought to depart. See *Origen contra Cels. lib. 8. p. 409.*

I shall take some Notice before I conclude of the Attempt our Author makes against the *positive* Precepts of Christianity. He sometimes pretends to prove that what are usually called the Christian Sacraments, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, are not Christian Institutions at all, nor designed for standing Ordinances. And the Argument he makes use of to this Purpose is, that the *external elementary Parts of these Sacraments were in use before as national Rites, Usages, or Customs among the Jews*, and that from thence it naturally follows, that they cannot, properly speaking, be *Christian Institutions*. See p. 104, &c. 202, 203. But that which makes any thing to be properly a Christian Institution, is its being instituted or appointed by *Christ* himself to be observed in his Church; if therefore *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* were thus instituted and appointed by *Christ* himself, they are properly

properly speaking *Christian Institutions*. And it doth not alter the Case, whether we suppose them with regard to the outward *elementary* part of them to have been used among the *Jews* before or not. Thus, *e. g.* let us grant that *Baptism* was a Rite of long standing among the *Jews* in the Initiation of *Profelytes* before the Time of our Saviour, tho' this Author is in the wrong to affirm that no learned Christian ever denied it, for I could name him several learned Christians that have denied this. But I am willing to grant that it was used before the Time of *John* the Baptist, and of our Saviour, in admitting *Profelytes of Righteousness*, who were obliged to observe the whole Law (for as to the *Profelytes of the Gate*, they never were admitted by *Baptism**, tho' this Writer positively affirms they were, *p.* 105.) But then it must be considered that *Baptism* in this Case was never used alone, but as joined with Circumcision and the offering a Sacrifice. If therefore Christ had used *Baptism*, merely because it was a *Jewish* national Rite or Usage as this Writer pretends, why did he not use *Circumcision* for the same Reason in admitting *Profelytes*, since this was accounted to be no less essential, yea and of greater Importance, and no Man could be a Member of that Church and Polity without being circumcised? It was not therefore merely because it had been used before among the *Jews*, but because on other Accounts it seemed fit to the divine Wisdom, that this should be the standing Ordinance of Initiation under the New Testament; as Circumcision had been under the Old. And accordingly *Baptism* was applied by our Saviour to other and farther Purposes than it had been among the *Jews*. And I suppose our Author will scarce pretend that they were baptized before in the Name of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, or that they were baptized into the Death of Christ.

* See *Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent. lib. 2. cap. 3.*

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With regard to the *Lord's Supper*, he pretends that the *Jews* had a Rite or Usage like this at all their common Meals; and I will grant that it is probable they usually had Bread and Wine at their Meals: but what is this to the Purpose? Will he say that they ever received Bread and Wine in the Manner and for the Purposes for which our *Saviour* appointed it at his last Supper? Was Bread and Wine ever used before among the *Jews* in Commemoration of the Sufferings and Death of Christ? And whereas he tells us, that *this Usage was pretty early brought into the Churches, in their very large and populous Assemblies, first at Corinth, and afterwards at other Places, but this was done without any apostolical Advice or Authority*, p. 107. Nothing is plainer, than that they received this Ordinance at the same Time that they received the Knowledge of Christianity from the Apostle Paul. From whose express Words it is manifest that he delivered it to the *Corinthians*, as a Thing that he had received by immediate Revelation from Christ himself, and as a Matter of Importance to be observed in the Christian Church till the coming of our Lord, and which required great Care and Reverence, and Solemnity in order to a right Celebration of it.

The Arguments he produceth against positive Precepts in general are little more than a confident asserting the very Thing that is in Debate: As when he saith it is plain, and he may venture to take it as a *Postulatum*, that all Means of God's Appointment must have a natural Relation to, and Connection with the End, &c. or else we must suppose that God is an arbitrary Being. p. 201, 413. For a Thing which is in itself antecedently indifferent, may by divine Appointment be appropriated to a sacred Signification and Use, which it would not have had without that Designation and Appointment; and then when it hath by God's Institution such

such a Signification annexed to it, may be highly useful to promote the main Ends of Religion. Any one that is acquainted with human Nature cannot but know that the appointing outward Signs and Representations may in some Cases impress a Sense of a Thing more strongly and affectingly upon the Mind. Special commemorative Signs and Seasons set apart for that Purpose, have often been judged, by the wisest Nations, to be of great Use for keeping up the Remembrance of important Events. And what Arguments can be brought to prove either that God himself cannot in consistency with his Wisdom and Goodness appoint some Things of this Kind to be observed, or that if he did they would be of no Use or Advantage in Religion at all?

To apply this. The Death of Christ is represented in the sacred Writings as an Event of great Importance, the Belief and Consideration of which is of the highest Use in Religion: and even this Writer himself supposes the Death of Christ to be *improvable* to many valuable and excellent Purposes, some of which he is pleased to mention, p. 166, 168, 177, &c. And if so, then certainly it must be of great Use in practical Religion frequently to commemorate the Death of Christ. And the more solemn that Remembrance is, the more likely it is to answer the End, and make proper Impressions upon the Mind. And consequently an Ordinance, the express Design of which is to oblige us to such a frequent and solemn Remembrance of it, and to make it present to our Minds by sensible Signs and Representations, must be highly useful for attaining and promoting the great End of all Religion.

Our Author makes the *Application* and *Attention* of the Mind, and a Man's taking *himself off* from such *Avocations to other Business and Pleasure* that

that would hinder his main Pursuit, to be the necessary Means of obtaining the divine Wisdom or true Religion, *p.* 421. And if so, then it must be of great Use to have solemn Seasons of Recollection, in which Men look upon themselves as under an Obligation by divine Appointment to apply themselves more particularly to religious Considerations, which otherwise in the Hurry of worldly Business or Pleasures they would be apt to neglect. For this Reason I have always thought the Appointment of *weekly* Sabbaths to be a wise Constitution: and in this View the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper may be also shewn to be of great Use; since when rightly attended upon according to the original Design, it hath a Tendency to fix the Attention of our Minds on such Considerations as must needs have a mighty Influence to strengthen and improve our Love to God, and Charity towards Mankind, and to inspire us with a deep Sense of the Evil and Malignity of Sin. To which it may be added, that it engageth us to frequent *Self-Examination*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. which hath a Tendency to promote that *Self-Acquaintance*, which by the Author's Acknowledgment is necessary to divine Wisdom and true Religion. And besides all this, it must needs be of great Use as it engageth us frequently to recognize the *Obligations* of the New Covenant that was ratified by the Blood of Christ, and to renew our solemn Engagements to the Practice of true Religion and Righteousness. When *Pliny* in his celebrated Letter to *Trajan* represents the primitive Christians as solemnly binding themselves in their religious Assemblies, not to commit Immoralities, such as Thefts, Robberies, Adulteries, Falshood, and betraying their Trust; *ne furti, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent*; was this a Prejudice to their Character! Or can it be

be thought that their Religion was the worse for having an Ordinance in which they solemnly bound themselves by an Obligation, accompanied with sacred external Rites or Signs, to the Practice of all Righteousness and Virtue, and to avoid Vice and Wickedness.

And now it will be easy to form a Judgment concerning the Justness of what our Author advances when speaking of the Distinction between *the Religion of the End*, and *the Religion of the Means*, he saith, that *the Means* in this Case must be *as necessary as the End*, for otherwise they would be no Means at all, in contra-distinction to any thing else: And that *unnecessary Means* are fit only for an *unnecessary Religion*, and they that will have the one ought to be content with the other, p. 420. When he talks of *unnecessary Means*, the Word *unnecessary* may admit of two Significations. If by *unnecessary Means* he intends Things that are absolutely useless and insignificant, it will be easily acknowledged that such Things are good for nothing, and of no Advantage in Religion; but such are not the Christian Institutions, which rightly considered and observed according to the original Appointment are of great and manifold Use. But if by calling them *unnecessary*, he means that they are not as necessary as the End itself, and that it is possible the End may be obtained without them, then in this Sense Means may not be absolutely necessary, and yet may be of considerable Use. And if they can be shewn to be very *useful* in the original Design and Appointment, and that they were prescribed by the Author of our Religion, that in the Use of them the great Ends of Religion might be promoted; to discard or neglect them under Pretence of their not being absolutely necessary would be a very wrong Conduct, and would shew both Folly and Disobedience. Our Author is pleased often to

alk of *mechanical Means of Grace, mechanical Agency of the Spirit, and the Conveyance of Grace, ex opere operato*, and he represents those that think themselves obliged to attend upon those instituted Means as expecting that they would *operate physically upon them like Medicines upon the Blood and Humours*; but without having recourse to any such absurd Suppositions, it may be justly said, that if divine *Assistances* be necessary to our making a Proficiency in the Knowledge and Practice of true Religion, as this Writer himself seemeth sometimes to grant, then, on Supposition that God hath instituted Ordinances to ingage us to a solemn Recollection and Remembrance of such Things as are of great Importance in Religion, and to be of use in strengthening, exciting, and enlarging good Affections and Dispositions in our Souls, those that from a regard to his Institutions, and in obedience to his Authority are careful in their Attendance upon them, and endeavour to observe them in a proper Manner according to the original Appointment and Design, may more justly *expect* the divine Assistances and Influences in the Use of those Means, than they that allow themselves in the habitual Neglect, much more in the Contempt of them.

There is one Objection more which I shall here take some Notice of, because the Author makes a great Flourish with it, to shew that there is no Certainty in revealed Religion, and that is drawn from the *Differences* there are among *Christians*, with relation to the Articles of their Faith. He sets out with great Pomp in the Beginning of his Book with giving us a *Catalogue* of Doctrines of revealed Religion in which Christians differ, and those the *most learned, impartial, and diligent Inquirers*. From whence he argues that the Scriptures are uncertain and obscure, and that there

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can be no important or *fundamental* Doctrines in revealed Religion, and no *determinate* Sense in which they are to be taken: that there are as many different Schemes of revealed Religion as there are Men; and that it is not *one Religion*, but a *vast Number of Religions*: And he thinks it is *strange* that God should reveal a Religion as of any *Necessity or Use* to Mankind, which may be taken in as many different Senses as there are different Capacities, Apprehensions, and Ways of thinking among Men. See p. 15—19, 95, 96. and he returns to it again at the latter End of his Book, p. 443, 444.

But if there were any Thing in this Way of arguing, it might be equally turned against *natural Religion*, and even against the common Principles of *Sense and Reason*, to shew that there is nothing to be depended upon either in Religion or in any Thing else. For tho' this Writer takes upon him to affirm that the *Religion of Nature* has been always the same, and must for ever be alike apprehended by the Understandings of all Mankind, as soon as it comes to be fairly proposed and considered, p. 94. yet nothing is more certain than that as large a Catalogue might be easily produced of Differences in Doctrines relating to *natural Religion*, as what he hath been pleased to give us with regard to the Doctrines of Revelation; and that among Persons that pretend to impartial Enquiry, and some of whom have appeared to be Persons of *Sobriety, Benevolence, and all the social Virtues*, as he expresseth it. And yet it doth not follow either that there are no important and *fundamental* Doctrines in *natural Religion*, or that there is no *determinate* Sense in which those Doctrines are to be taken. Our Author himself furnisheth us with some Instances of this Kind. He argueth at some Length against some Persons who,

he tells us, *look upon themselves to be great Philosophers and very wise Men*; and whom he himself acknowledgeth to be *Men of Parts, and Subtily in Speculation*, who yet deny Man's *Free-agency*, and introduce an universal *Fatalism* and *Necessity* in all *Actions*. He also asserteth the *Obligation* of the *Duty of Prayer*, which he seemeth to regard as an important *Duty* of natural *Religion* against some in this *Age* who deny it. And he tells us, that *many great and celebrated Philosophers*, Persons that *are above the gross Ignorance of the common Herd*, have maintained, that the *World* is governed by certain inherent *Powers* and *Properties* communicated to it in the *Beginning*, without the continual *Presence*, *Influence*, and *Operation* of the first *Cause* upon it. This he represents as a *Philosophical Scheme of Natural Atheism*, the *Parent* of *Moral Atheism*, and argues strenuously against it: See from p. 179, to p. 197. These then by his own Acknowledgment are Instances of *Differences* relating to *Matters* of great Importance in *Natural Religion*, and yet he will not allow that Men's differing about them is any *Proof* of their being uncertain and obscure or of no *Use*; for he expressly declares them to be *Matters of infinite Consequence to Mankind*.

It is as true in *Points* of *Natural Religion* as in *Reveal'd*, that where Men do profess to agree in the *Doctrines*, they often differ in the *Manner* of explaining them, and in some or other of the *Ideas* they form concerning them*. From whence

* There are perhaps hardly any two thinking Men that exactly agree in all the *Ideas* they form concerning the *Divine Nature*, *Attributes*, and *Providence*. But it would be foolish to pretend that they do not agree in believing and acknowledging the *Being*, *Attributes*, and *Providence* of *God*, because they do not agree in all the *Ideas* they form concerning them. And yet thus it is that this *Writer* argues in order to magnify the *Differences*

it would follow according to our Author's Manner of arguing, that there are as many different Schemes of Natural Religion as there are Men; that there is no *determinate* Sense in which its Doctrines and Principles are to be taken; and that there is no Natural Religion at all, because God would *not give a Religion as of any Use to Mankind* that is capable of being taken in so many different Senses. Tho' how this could be prevented except God should miraculously convey the same Ideas to all Men, and at once remove all their Prejudices and Prepossessions, and heal all their Vices and wrong Affections of Mind, is hard to conceive. A noted Sceptick *Sextus Empiricus* makes use of this very Argument of the Author to shew that there is no Certainty to be depended upon with respect to the *Being* of a God, a *Providence*, and the *Moral Differences* of Good and Evil. See the third Book of his Hypotyposes.

But the Truth is, the Argument whether with regard to Natural or Revealed Religion is weak and fallacious. It doth not follow that any Thing is uncertain and obscure, or of no Consequence, merely because Persons pretending to Learning and impartial Inquiry differ about it. If a Doctrine comes to me confirmed with good Evidence and sufficient Proof, I am not to think worse of it either with regard to its Truth or Importance, because another Man that professeth to be an honest impartial Inquirer denies or doubts of it. For the Causes of Men's different Apprehensions lye very deep; and it is hard to know who is an impartial

Differences about the Doctrines of Revelation. But it doth not follow with regard to revealed any more than it doth with regard to natural Religion, that no two thinking Men agree in any of its Doctrines or Principles, because they may happen to form different *Ideas* concerning something or other relating to those Doctrines.

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unprejudiced Inquirer. This is a Thing that we cannot properly judge of. There are often some unobserved Prejudices, some secret wrong Turns and Affections of Mind, which hinder those from a right Discernment of Truth in particular Instances, that are otherwise sober, honest, and diligent. We must form our own Judgments concerning any Doctrine according to the Evidence that ariseth to us upon the best Enquiry we are able to make; and if it appeareth to be well-founded in Reason or Revelation this ought to be sufficient to satisfy our own Minds, and to Influence and regulate our own Practice. And we may also according to the Sense we have of its Importance use all proper Endeavours in a fair way to convince and satisfy others too, and to oppose the contrary Errors. At the same Time we ought to exercise great Charity towards those that have the Appearance of serious Enquirers, and who seem to have a real Love of Truth and Goodness, however greatly we may think them to be mistaken. But there are some Persons concerning whom it may be said without any Breach of Charity, that their Behaviour is such as plainly discovereth the bad Temper of their Minds, and that they are not in a proper Disposition for seeking out Truth. And I believe it would be difficult to find an Author that hath taken less care to preserve the Appearances of a candid, a serious and unprejudiced Inquiry, than this Gentleman that is pleased to assume the Character of the *Moral Philosopher*. And Towards the End of his Book he breaks forth into a large Encomium on *Moral Philosophy* or divine Wisdom, and the proper Means of attaining to it. His general Design in this is obvious, which is to direct Men to seek the Knowledge of true Religion by contemplating *the Heavens, the Earth, Themselves, and Brute Creatures, in Opposition to* their

their Learning it from the *Holy Scriptures*. No Man will deny that it is very useful, and a Duty, to consider the Discoveries that are made to us of the divine Glory and Perfections in the Frame of Nature, in the Works of Creation and Providence, and in the Constitution of our own Bodies and Minds. And a much greater Progress hath been made in all these Ways of obtaining Knowledge by those that have the Advantage of divine Revelation, than was ever made by any that had no other Way of Instruction than what this Writer proposeth. Revelation doth not at all hinder but promote such Inquiries: it doth not discourage but assist and improve the Exercise of *cool impartial Reason*; and at the same time, that it exciteth and engageth us to make use of all the Light of Nature and Reason, it openeth and enlargeth our Views by giving us a more clear and certain Discovery of several Things which it is of Importance to us to know, and which yet either we could not have known at all, or not with such satisfying Clearness and Certainty as we can do by that Assistance. Our Author talks in magnificent Terms of a Man's *conversing with God*, and deriving Communications of Light and Knowledge from the eternal Father and Fountain of it, and bearing the clear intelligible Voice of his Maker and Former speaking to his silent, undisturbed, attentive Reason. But tho' a Man that earnestly implores the Assistance of the Father of Lights, and with a humble and teachable Mind gladly makes use of the Advantage of Reason, and Revelation which God hath put into his Hands, and is ready to practise as far as he knows, may upon good Grounds hope for God's gracious Guidance and Assistance as far as is necessary to lead him to true Happiness; yet if, besides the common Light of Nature and Reason, God has been pleased to favour us with farther Discoveries of great Importance

tance by a more extraordinary *Revelation*, those, that under Pretence of hearkening to their own Reason, obstinately reject this *Revelation*, tho' confirmed with all the Evidence that can reasonably be desired in such a Case, and shut their Eyes against the heavenly Light, cannot justly expect God's gracious Communications; but rather have Reason to be afraid that he will give them up to the Hardness of their own Hearts, and will call them to a severe Account for their obstinate Unbelief and Disobedience hereafter. 'Tis certain that the *Gospel* pronounceth a very severe Sentence against those to whom it is made known, and who yet *reject* the Evidence; and warranteth us to conclude, that their Infidelity is owing to very criminal *Causes*, and bad Dispositions of Mind; and that their Danger is very great, and their Condemnation shall be aggravated. It highly concerneth this Author to consider this, who pretends to own the great Usefulness of *Revelation* in Aid of human Reason in the present corrupt State of human Nature, and yet useth his utmost Endeavour to expose it to the Derision and Contempt of Mankind. I heartily wish him a better Temper of Mind, and that he would seriously reflect, if it be not yet too late, on his great Guilt and Danger. I am sorry there is so much Reason to fear that he is incorrigibly hardened in his Infidelity. For he hath plainly enough let us know that if he had lived in the Time of our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, and had been an Eyewitness to all the glorious *Miracles* that were then wrought, and all the extraordinary Powers and Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*, that gave such an illustrious Attestation to the *Gospel Revelation*, this would have had no Influence upon him, since he will not allow these to have been any Proofs at all. On others I trust they will still have their designed Effect.

I have fairly examined whatsoever he hath offered that hath any Appearance of *Reason*, and many Things that are little better than downright *Misrepresentation* and Abuse. I am satisfied that if Reason and Argument be calmly attended to with that Seriousness and Impartiality that becometh the Weight and Importance of the Subject, our holy Religion hath nothing to fear from the Attacks of its most subtle and malicious Adversaries. God grant that those that profess to believe it may be careful to *adorn* their Profession by all the Fruits of Piety, Charity, Purity, and the heavenly Mind and Life, which it is the manifest Design and Tendency of its excellent Doctrines and Precepts to promote.

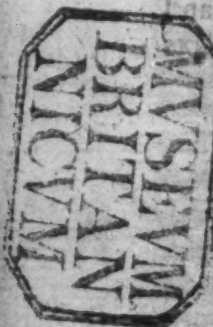
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